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## A.S. Makarenko's General Educational Ideas and Their Applicability to a Non-Totalitarian Society

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A. S. MAKARENKO'S GENERAL EDUCATIONAL IDEAS  
AND THEIR APPLICABILITY TO A  
NONTOTALITARIAN SOCIETY

by  
Rose Edwards

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

April

1991

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My sincere appreciation is extended to Professor Dr. Leonhard Froese, founder and director of the Philipps University Research Center for Comparative Education in Marburg, Germany, and to Dr. Götz Hillig, head of the Research Center's Makarenko Department, for providing me with much of the necessary research materials. Their help and support have made this study possible.

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Above all, I am deeply grateful to my husband, Gordon, for his understanding and encouragement.

## A NOTE TO THE READER

1. Transliteration All Russian terms have been transliterated from Cyrillic into Roman letters.
2. Dates All dates up to January, 1918, are based on the "old style" Russian calendar.
3. Pronunciation The correct pronunciation of Makarenko's name, according to James Bowen, should be stressed in the middle, and sound something like M'kár-i-enko.
4. Spelling In the English literature, Russian names and terms have diverse spellings. Guided by the advice of Professor Irwin Weil, Slavic Department, Northwestern University, the standard for appropriate spelling was that of the Library of Congress System, except for commonly used words whose spelling diverged from this system. In this case, the commonly used spelling was chosen.
5. Translation Except where otherwise stated, all translations from German into English were made by the author.
6. Authenticity To the extent possible, the author has drawn on the currently available volumes of A. S. Makarenko Gesammelte Werke, Marburger Ausgabe [A. S. Makarenko Collected Works, Marburg Edition]. The Marburg Edition has been considered authentic.



## VITA

The author, Rose Edwards, is the daughter of Theodor E. Schwenk and Else (Grimminger) Schwenk. She was born October 7, 1940, in Göttingen, Germany.

Her elementary and secondary education was obtained at the Freie Waldorfschule Engelberg near Stuttgart, Germany, where she graduated in 1957.

In September 1962, Ms. Edwards entered the Städtische Fachschule für Beschäftigungstherapie München (Municipal Vocational School for Occupational Therapy, Munich), where she received a Diploma in Occupational Therapy in 1964. Ms. Edwards also holds a "Certificate of Proficiency in English" from the University of Cambridge, England (1969), and a "Diploma for the French Language" from the Alliance Française, Paris, France (1961).

In 1970, Ms. Edwards immigrated to the United States. She received the degree of Master of Arts in Education from Adelphi University, Garden City, New York in 1978, and the degree of Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Therapy from National College of Education (since 1990 renamed National-Louis University) in 1983.

Ms. Edwards worked in Esperanza School for Handicapped Children as teacher and program director from 1970-1988.

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## INTRODUCTION

Already during his lifetime, Soviet educator and writer Anton S. Makarenko (1888-1939) was subject of much discussion and controversy in the Soviet Union; after his death, as his writings were translated and published in countries around the world, he gained international recognition. Scholars worldwide have interpreted his educational concepts in widely divergent ways. Sanctified after his death by Soviet educators, Makarenko is often described as the father of Soviet pedagogy and founder of communist education. Some Western educators have considered Makarenko a pedagogical genius, a creative teacher, a great humanitarian; others have seen in him a political ideologue who put pedagogy into the service of communism.

In 1968, Leonhard Froese, founder and director of the Philipps University's Research Center for Comparative Education in Marburg, Germany, established a Makarenko Department within the research center. The Makarenko Department has made its sole aim the study of Anton Makarenko's life, work, and international reception. When asked by a visitor from the USSR why he and scholars at the Makarenko Department occupied themselves with Makarenko, Froese explained that Makarenko had captured their special

interest because they believed that a "modern classic of pedagogy" (Froese's words) had not yet been sufficiently explored. Froese and researchers at the Makarenko Department distinguished Makarenko not only as the most outstanding Soviet pedagogue, but also as the most significant pedagogical writer in the Russian language, who, as Froese expressed it, had "something to say" to his own people as well as the rest of the world. Elsewhere, Froese elaborated this view:

Forty years of Makarenko in Germany, twenty-five years of Makarenko research, fifteen years of personal pursuits with Makarenko, and still--one might object--no end. Yet we [scholars at the Makarenko Department] know no answer other than a question in return: Will men ever have fully researched and explored a Comenius, a Rousseau, a Pestalozzi, or a Tolstoy to the point of having "enough" of him? A. S. Makarenko, the youngest among equals, is a phenomenon whom we have barely just begun to recognize and to interpret for the pedagogy of our and other times.<sup>1</sup>

The Makarenko Department in Marburg is the only Makarenko research center outside the USSR. (A more detailed description of their activities will follow.) Their research--since 1968 pursued by full- and-part-time specialists--and findings have changed the field of Makarenko scholarship and must be seen as a watershed in the Makarenko inquiry, providing for the first time a scientific basis for the appraisal of Makarenko's life and

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<sup>1</sup>Leonhard Froese, in Götz Hillig, ed., Makarenko in Deutschland 1927-1967. Texte und Berichte [Makarenko in Germany 1927-1967. Texts and reports] (Braunschweig: Georg Westerman, 1967), 27.

work. The author, (whose mother tongue is German), was able to obtain some of the Makarenko Department's published literature through the trade or through the interlibrary loan system, but most came from the Makarenko Department directly. This has made it possible to base a study of Makarenko's life and work on well-grounded research. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine Makarenko's life and educational ideas and to assess the relevance and applicability of his pedagogical ideas to a nontotalitarian society.

One might ask why this once obscure Ukrainian elementary school teacher, more than fifty years after his death, continues to make such claim on the interest and attention of modern scholars. A brief background of Makarenko and the international reception of his pedagogical ideas may help explain why he continues to demand our attention.

Anton S. Makarenko was thirty-two years old when, in 1920, he was asked by Ukrainian authorities to organize and direct a labor colony for homeless children and youth. As a result of Russia's many catastrophic political and social upheavals, countless young people had become orphaned and homeless and many turned to crime in order to survive. Under exceedingly difficult and challenging conditions, Makarenko found a way to cope with the pressing problems these youth presented and provide for their physical,

social, and psychological care and, slowly, to restore their human nature. In his Pedagogicheskaja poema (A Pedagogical Poem), Makarenko described his successes and failures in resocializing the vagrant youngsters who came into his care, and his efforts in helping them reenter society as healthy, responsible, socially conscious people. (Exact figures are not known, but over the years, hundreds of children and youth passed through his colony and later through his commune). Many of his colonists and communards, as Makarenko called them, became respected citizens and workers, some of them successful teachers, others doctors, engineers, or factory workers, with families and children of their own.

While the social and political events of Makarenko's generation provided the outer context of his work, they did not actually shape his educational ideas or provide the methods for his teaching. These he forged through direct contact with his colonists and through reliance on his own practical experiences from which he drew further conclusions. Yet political policies and official decrees determined the way in which Makarenko's ideas were received. Thus, in the 1920s, after the revolution, when early Soviet educators followed Western progressive thinking and experimented with liberal child-centered and permissive methods, Makarenko fell out of favor with the authorities for applying stern and disciplined approaches, and for using

the community--in Soviet terminology "the collective"--as an agent for the resocialization of his often reckless youngsters.

In the 1930s, as liberal approaches were replaced by stricter procedures intended to provide the nation with well-disciplined and highly-trained cadres to meet Stalin's political goals, Makarenko's ideas and practices found official acceptance. After his death, in the 1940s, he was --by a process still not fully understood--celebrated as the founder of Soviet education, his pedagogy having been declared the authoritative Soviet system. Having been canonized as cultural hero, Makarenko was also revered for Soviet virtues that were either embroidered or not true at all. For example, early Soviet biographers claimed that he had been a convinced Marxist well before the revolution and that his pedagogy was permeated with Stalinist "humanism."

Throughout his postrevolutionary career, in reports, books and articles on education, in novels, essays, stories, and plays, Makarenko wrote of his experiences as teacher, guardian, and social worker of homeless youth. His writings were generally published in the Soviet Union by himself; in 1950-1952, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the RSFSR published most of his works under the title Collected Works in Seven Volumes, known in the literature as Academy Edition and often cited as Sochineniya (Works).



This edition was expanded and republished in 1957-1958, to include letters and stenographically preserved lectures on diverse educational topics. For many years the Academy Edition was the most complete collection of Makarenko's writings, providing the basis for translations in and outside the Soviet Union and shaping scholars' image of Makarenko.

The scope of the dissemination of Makarenko's works can best be expressed in numbers such as those gathered by the Marburg researchers, who reported in 1971:

This bibliography . . . lists 702 separate and omnibus editions of Makarenko's publications in 59 languages. They convey an impression of Makarenko's reception in 34 countries. Up to the present the Pedagogic Poem and the works on family pedagogics Book for Parents and Lectures to Parents have had the widest circulation.<sup>2</sup>

The Marburger researcher Götz Hillig published a report on the dissemination of Makarenko's works outside the Soviet Union up to 1979, showing publication of Makarenko's works in thirty-seven languages, seventy percent of which had appeared in socialist countries.<sup>3</sup> His pedagogical writings have been studied in all Socialist and Communist countries and in Israel, China, India, Japan, and African nations. In the West, and in Germany especially, there has

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<sup>2</sup>Götz Hillig und Siegfried Weitz, eds., Makarenko Materialien II, (Marburg: VVG Verlag, 1971), 182.

<sup>3</sup>Götz Hillig, "Die Verbreitung der Werke A. S. Makarenkos ausserhalb der Sowjetunion." [The dissemination of A. S. Makarenko's works outside the Soviet Union] Pädagogische Rundschau 11, (1980): 745-753, here 746 and 753.

been increasing interest in Makarenko's writings. By 1966, twenty-seven years after his death, over 800 Makarenko titles existed in the German secondary literature, and by 1971, more than 1000 books had been written about him in Germany.

In the United States several authors have observed in the 1960s and 1970s that Makarenko was practically unknown in the English speaking West. Yet a continuous, if thin stream of commentary on Makarenko's educational ideas and writings can be found in the English language literature. (The most significant contributions are cited in the bibliography.) The earliest reference on Makarenko is dated 1928, when he was at the height of his career. In 1927, on a tour through Soviet Russia, the American educator Lucy Wilson visited the Gorky Colony in Kuriazh (Ukraine), and in 1928 published a report of this visit and her meeting with Makarenko in The New Schools of New Russia. Ten years later, at the 1939 World Fair in New York, visitors to the Soviet pavilion could find a brochure in English, "Children in the Land of Socialism" written by Makarenko. Since 1936, the English speaking public had the opportunity to read Makarenko's autobiographical trilogy The Road to Life (the English title of Pedagogicheskaja poema, translated by Stephen Garry).

In the following decades, the Makarenko (English language) literature steadily increased in the United

States. In 1949, British author W. L. Goodman published the first Makarenko monograph, titled Anton Simeonovitch Makarenko, Russian Teacher. In the 1950s, the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow exported three of Makarenko's major works in English translation: The Road to Life (1951, translated for a second time by I. and T. Litvinov), Learning to Life. Flags on the Battlements (1953), and A Book for Parents (1954). With three of his principal works now available in English, Makarenko began to draw the attention of American and English speaking educators. Journal articles (typically on Soviet education) began to include discussions on Makarenko's educational ideas, and in 1958 Frederic Lilge published a monograph Anton Semeynovich Makarenko: An Analysis of His Educational Ideas in the Context of Soviet Society.

Interest in Makarenko's writings gained momentum during the 1960s, which saw the first American dissertation on Makarenko, Anton Makarenko and the Development of Soviet Education, by James Bowen, and Makarenko's name beginning to surface in textbooks. For example, Georg Z. F. Bereday et al mentioned him several times in their landmark study The Changing Soviet School (1960). In 1965, four of Makarenko's lectures, Problems of Soviet School Education, published in London, Moscow, and New York appeared in English translation. In 1967, an American firm published A Book for Parents, renamed The Collective Family: A Handbook for

Russian Parents, with an introduction by the acclaimed American psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, who tells that in the USSR and other socialist countries this work has been used by parents as a popular manual on child rearing. According to Bronfenbrenner, Dr. Benjamin Spock could be seen as Makarenko's American counterpart, except that Makarenko's concern was with the child's moral health. The same year, two articles appeared in The New York Times Magazine, with such titles as "What the Soviet Dr. Spock Taught," by Tobia Frankel, and "Soviet Too, Has Its Dr. Spock," by Fred M. Hechinger. This may have been the only time that Makarenko's name entered American living rooms.

The literature of the 1970s and 1980s shows an increase in discussion about Makarenko--the peak occurring in the late 1970s when authors, among them Soviet writers, commemorated the ninetieth anniversary of Makarenko's birth (1888). Noteworthy are the doctoral dissertation by Sara M. Lehrman, "The Pedagogical Ideas of Anton Semenovich Makarenko," (1971), two books (one without date) including reminiscences about Makarenko and excerpts from his lectures and writings, and, in the early 1980s, the (partial) translation into English of Makarenko's book The March of 1930, published in several installments by Slavic and European Education Review. In 1981, the same journal published a review essay by John Dunstan, University of Birmingham, England, titled, "Demythologizing Makarenko," in

which Dunstan introduced American readers to the Makarenko Department in Marburg and summarized some of their surprising findings regarding Makarenko's life and activities. Through this article the author first learned of the Marburg research.

Makarenko's reception among American educators has been various. Some have seen him as the greatest representative of communist education and a follower of Lenin and Stalin, whose views and activities can be understood only in this political connection. Others have admired Makarenko for his outstanding achievements in redeeming juvenile delinquents and for his success in transforming vagrant youth into self-respecting, useful citizens in the face of almost insuperable obstacles. Early in the American (and English language) literature, and with increasing persistence, educators considered the possible relevance of Makarenko's ideas to Western education, particularly in the area of rehabilitating problem youngsters. As early as 1933, Dewey suggested that the West could learn from Makarenko's work with juvenile delinquents.

The educator most firmly opposed to the applicability of Makarenko's ideas in the West is James Bowen (1960). While calling Makarenko a humanist "who worked wonders," Bowen believed that Makarenko based his educational system on a particular political ideology, that it was designed to meet political needs, and that it

therefore had only immediate value. On this point he differs with other educators, particularly with Lilge (1958), who thought Makarenko went beyond ideological orthodoxies, looking directly at human nature for educational answers. Bowen rejects the applicability of Makarenko's ideas in the West but leaves a small loophole by saying that " . . . the future alone will indicate how accurate were his perceptions and how lasting will be his achievements."

Indeed, the future did just that: In 1986, twenty years later, educator and scholar Kristen D. Juul reported in his article "International Trends in Therapeutic Communities and Collectives," published in the International Journal for Special Education, that Scandinavia shows an expanding number of "intentional communities" for alienated youth (such as alcohol and drug addicted youngsters, or adolescents with severe adjustment problems), modelled on Makarenko's collectives. According to Juul, these collectives "show vitality and relevance to the needs of troubled youth." He suggests that other countries may consider this type or model of therapeutic community as a viable alternative for intervention. The Scandinavian example seems to demonstrate that Makarenko's perceptions have an appeal and usefulness that, in Dunstan's words, "transcends the temporal and spatial confines of their formulation."

When the Marburg Philipps University's Makarenko Department opened in 1968, its two principal researchers Götz Hillig (head of the Makarenko Department) and Siegfried Weitz (lecturer) may not have anticipated encountering facts that would lead to a revision of commonly held views of Makarenko. Essentially, they were focussing on the critical examination and textual analysis of Makarenko's writing found in the "inherited" Moscow Academy Edition, at that time still the dominant (and only) collection of Makarenko's work. In their textual research, they discovered (in the Academy Edition) numerous deviations from the first printings of Makarenko's manuscripts, as well as editorial additions and excisions that constituted substantial fact and content changes. The Marburg scholars traced the origin of such alterations to certain texts printed in the 1940s, when Soviet editors tried to present Makarenko in the most favorable light possible. Confronted with scientifically unreliable source materials, the Marburg researchers focussed on producing a historically accurate reprint of Makarenko's writings. Their plan is to publish a twenty volume annotated edition, titled A. S. Makarenko Gesammelte Werke, Marburger Ausgabe (A. S. Makarenko Collected Works, Marburg Edition). This edition will consist of the original Makarenko text, with German translation and detailed commentary. The first section (13 volumes) will contain works published during Makarenko's lifetime, including some

newly discovered writings. The second section (seven volumes) will consist of Makarenko's posthumous works. All texts will be printed in chronological sequence.

To date (1991), eight volumes have been published, including most of Makarenko's published writings between 1923 and 1937 (see bibliography) and, among Makarenko's posthumous works, four original stenographs of lectures found in Soviet archives. The Marburg scholars have visited the Soviet Union and examined texts from accessible Soviet archives. In the interest of accurately appraising Makarenko's works, it was the belief of Leonhard Froese and the Marburg researchers that priority should be given to the critical examination of source material in order to produce an authoritative and reliable edition of Makarenko's collected works. At this point, the Marburg Edition is the most definitive edition of Makarenko's writings. It must also be noted that between 1983 and 1986, the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences published Makarenko's pedagogical works. The first three volumes of this eight-volume edition have appeared in German translation.

Of great significance to Makarenko scholarship was the systematic examination of existing Soviet literature on Makarenko's biography undertaken by the Marburg researchers. They found, for example, alterations in Makarenko's letters and diaries, such as the replacement of "Lenin" with "Stalin." Makarenko's Soviet biographers, excessively



hagiographic in their tone, attempted to create the image of a Soviet cultural hero. In addition to drawing on Soviet archives recently made accessible to research, the Marburg editors were able to locate Makarenko's younger brother, Vitalii, and secure his testimony. His written memoirs have contributed to a broader and far more differentiated understanding of Makarenko's life. Interim findings, published by Hillig in his article, "Der andere Makarenko" (The other Makarenko [1980]), reveal a more authentic and historically accurate image of Makarenko--one less perfect, but far more interesting.

The Marburg Makarenko Department has also published a number of books, articles, indexes, and bibliographies on his international reception, including bibliographies and collected indexes of Makarenko's writings worldwide, (periodically updated in 1969, 1971, and 1980), and two collections of contributions by Makarenko scholars from various eastern and western countries.

To stimulate discussion on Makarenko's life and work and to cultivate contact with interested scholars worldwide, the Makarenko department has organized major international Makarenko symposia in Germany, one in 1966, in 1971, and in 1989. This author was invited to attend the most recent Makarenko symposium, on the theme "Der Stand und die Perspektiven der Makarenko Forschung" (Makarenko research: current status and perspectives). Some seventy

Makarenko scholars from twelve countries attended, including Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Germany, (then still East and West), England, Italy, Finland, Denmark, and Israel. Reports and papers centered on historic-bibliographic topics as well as current applications of Makarenko's educational theories. This author reported on the present situation of Makarenko research and reception in the United States.

This was for the first time ever that the majority of Makarenko researchers gathered in one place, including scholars from the USSR and [then still East] Germany. The next International Makarenko Symposium will take place in 1991 in Poltava (Ukraine). There was a consensus among all attending scholars to replace the inherited misrepresentations of Makarenko with a historically accurate account and to search for additional source materials, in order to re-interpret Makarenko's life and work.

In this study the author has drawn extensively on the current Marburg Edition and other materials made available by the Makarenko Department, using their new findings as the basis for discussion. Her interpretation of Makarenko's educational insights and their applicability to nontotalitarian societies is drawn mainly from her experience as a curative educator. The term "curative" was coined in Europe to mean educating "children in need of special care." For eighteen years she worked with mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed children and youth, most

from low-income families in Chicago. She recognized in Makarenko's work observations and insights that corresponded to her own experience as to what elements in the total pedagogical process proved effective--many of them commonly overlooked in the traditional classroom. One could say that the uniqueness of Makarenko's educational work lies not in his having created innovative methods or practices, but in having made full and original use of traditional educational principles. His talent surfaces in his special ability to take a fresh look at well known concepts and apply--often in a surprisingly simple way--conventional ideas creatively.

Makarenko gave new meaning and context to traditional concepts such as discipline and punishment, trust and responsibility. He imaginatively integrated the everyday need for hope and joyful anticipation of the future into the educational process. A man of practice who disapproved of being guided by theories, he liked to improvise his approaches. The literature is filled with stories illustrating his flare for responding spontaneously and effectively to problematic situations. He seems to have possessed intuitive insight into the particulars of a student's situation and to have sensed immediately what was needed. This faculty may have resulted, at least in part, from the humiliations and miseries he experienced as a child.

The author believes that what made Makarenko

remarkable as a teacher was the way he understood and responded to problems, his personal insight into his pupils' needs, and his constantly alert attention to every detail of their daily lives. It was the way he applied himself as a teacher that was exemplary and worthy of our study.

Makarenko made his ideas and experiences accessible; he described his students and clearly formulated everything he did. He left a record that allows us to examine and evaluate his ideas and to determine whether he should be regarded as a historical relic, a political ideologue, or a modern thinker whose ideas and example have relevance in today's world.

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This dissertation examines the educational ideas of the Soviet educator Anton Semyonovitch Makarenko and reassesses the general applicability of his concepts to education today. But to evaluate fairly Makarenko and his contribution to education, one must first understand the historical context in which he lived, as both the revolutionary events and the mood of his time provided the springboard for his pedagogical activities and mobilized his stamina and resourcefulness far beyond the ordinary scope.

The social and political upheavals that took place in his lifetime, the revolutionary chaos, and the struggle to transform a backward nation into a modern society provided the setting for his work with abandoned children and youth. The renowned Makarenko scholar Leonhard Froese has pointed out that to gain a historically accurate picture of Makarenko, it is essential that one be interested in everything that happened "in, around, and with Makarenko

within its respective historical actuality."<sup>1</sup>

Decisive to the tenor of the times in which Makarenko forged his educational ideas is the fact that he lived under two regimes, the archaic tsarist monarchy and the revolutionary Soviet government. It was a time when the force of old traditions still persisted, while new cultural, social, and political ideas relentlessly pressed ahead. It was a period when political revolutionaries ultimately brought about the full-scale annihilation of the ancient regime, and, charged with an unprecedented will for radical change, set out to accomplish their bold, far-reaching visions of total social transformation and the creation of a new Soviet man. Makarenko identified with the prevailing eschatological-apocalyptic consciousness that believed that by destroying the "old world" a new, ultimately ideal society would emerge.

It took an event as radical as the Russian Revolution to end the decaying tsarist system and install a new Bolshevik order. Makarenko was twenty-nine in 1917, when the Russian Revolution broke out. He had already experienced--to the degree that news reached the Ukraine, where he lived and worked--such ominous events as the Russo-

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<sup>1</sup>Leonhard Froese, "Zum Geleit: Der historische Makarenko" [Preamble: The historical Makarenko], in Götz Hillig, ed. Hundert Jahre Anton Makarenko. Neue Studien zur Biographie. [One Hundred years of Anton Makarenko: New studies regarding his biography] (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1988), 10. Hereafter cited as Hundert Jahre.

Japanese War (1904-1905), "Bloody Sunday" (a worker's demonstration before the Winter Palace in 1905, culminating in massacre of the demonstrators), as well as World War I (1914-1918), events that seriously weakened Nicholas II and ultimately led to the collapse of the monarchy. Following the 1917 Revolution, Makarenko experienced the full impact a bitter and catastrophic Civil War (1918-1921), and, in 1921, a famine that claimed the lives of millions. He saw the new Soviet regime under Lenin and later that of Stalin. These events fundamentally changed, and in many cases tragically ended, the lives of millions of Russian people.

The most immediate effects of these drastic social and political developments were felt by Makarenko in his career as a teacher. Under new Soviet rule, the tsarist educational system underwent fundamental changes: no longer did Makarenko's students come from stable and established homes; rather they were homeless waifs, those orphaned by wars, revolution, and famine. A decade later, they were the victims of Stalin's regime of terror, of collectivisation, and, in the Ukraine, of forced starvation. These children and youth were called besprizorniki, the homeless ones.

Because of the decisive impact these changes had on Makarenko's life and work, this chapter will examine the relevance of the Russian Revolution, early Soviet education, and the besprizorniki to the topic of this dissertation.

### The Russian Revolution

Russia has been conquered by the Bolsheviks. . . .  
 Lenin, March 1918

With these few words Lenin announced an event that Richard Pipes, in his book The Russian Revolution, called "arguably the most important event of the century."<sup>2</sup> In The Revolution Betrayed, Leon Trotsky, one of the primary protagonists of the Russian Revolution, in an equally sober tone, defined the utopian mission of the Russian Revolution as follows: "[The Bolshevik Party] set itself the task of overthrowing the world."<sup>3</sup> Pipes explains that to the revolutionary victors this meant a total "redesign of state, society, economy, and culture all over the world for the ultimate purpose of creating a new human being."<sup>4</sup>

There seems to be no clear beginning nor a clear end to this monumental event, the roots of which reach far back in history. As Pipes explains, the Russian Revolution, with certainty, did not begin with the collapse of tsarist rule

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<sup>2</sup>Richard Pipes, The Russian Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), xxi.

<sup>3</sup>Leon Trotsky, cited in Pipes, Russian Revolution, 339.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., xxi.



in February-March 1917 nor did it end with the Bolshevik victory in the Civil War of 1920. Rather, one might look at phases of the revolution, and at foreshadowing events. The senseless massacre of worker demonstrators in St. Petersburg on January 1905, known as "Bloody Sunday" marked such a "foreshock." Led by a priest, Father Gapon, the workers had gone to the tsar to present him with a petition calling for the election of a constitutional assembly by universal vote. Reactionary and autocratic by nature, Nicholas II reluctantly established an elective, legislative assembly, but the bloodbath had caused a surge of abhorrence that swept the country and irreparably damaged the image of the "good tsar."<sup>5</sup> In February 1917, violence resumed on an even larger scale with in a massive worker uprising in Petrograd, Moscow, and other Russian cities. As a result, the tsarist government collapsed and a provisional government was established (July 1917) which was then overthrown in October 25, 1917, by a Bolshevik coup d'état under Lenin's leadership.

Underlying these revolutionary events were the insufferable conditions of the Russian people, ruled since the 14th century by tsars who often mercilessly wielded their autocratic regime over a mute mass of millions. Russia's entire political, economic, social, and religious life was dominated by the absolutism of the tsars, whose

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., xxi; 22-26.

regimes were often characterized by reactionary and repressive policies, by "suppressing people as well as ideas" in their effort to stop the growth of Russian liberalism.<sup>6</sup> The tsarist monarchy was supported by five major institutions: the civil service, the security police, the gentry, the army, and the Orthodox Church.<sup>7</sup> These instruments of tsarist autocracy sustained the official government policy of "autocracy, Orthodoxy, and nationalism."<sup>8</sup> According to the principle of autocracy, the tsars were subject to no constitutional restraints. A definition of the emperor's authority dating from 1716--and still in force in 1900--reads:

His Majesty is an absolute monarch, who is not obliged to answer for his actions to anyone in the world but has the power and the authority to govern his states and lands as a Christian sovereign, in accord with his desire and goodwill.<sup>9</sup>

Until 1905, Russia was, in Pipes's words, "ruled by an absolute monarchy, administered by an all-powerful bureaucracy, and composed of social castes," resembling an "Oriental despotism."<sup>10</sup> Robert Ulich speaks of the mentality of the Russian people, best expressed in Russian novels that

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<sup>6</sup>Gerald L. Gutek, A History of the Western Educational Experience (New York: Random House, 1972), 336.

<sup>7</sup>Pipes, Russian Revolution, 61.

<sup>8</sup>Gutek, Western Educational Experience, 336.

<sup>9</sup>Pipes, Russian Revolution, 53-54.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 53.

describe the terrifying differences between the "nobility and the serfs, the capitalists and the workers, the internationally educated elite . . . and the ignorant peasant who hibernated during the winter on his stove and had never seen a book."<sup>11</sup> Ulich remarks that even before the revolution of 1917 various eyewitnesses were wondering what would happen if this sleeping mass would one day be struck by a "spark of self-awakening."

The Russian intellectuals, or intelligentsia, many of whom had travelled abroad or had been educated in Europe, were disaffected with the autocratic tsarist repressions. Animated by progressive and liberal ideas, they were appalled by the unenlightened and backward social and political conditions in Russia. Critical of the government's oppressive tactics, they attempted to awaken a spirit of reform in the peasants and the working class and themselves spoke and acted on behalf of Russia's masses.<sup>12</sup> Pipes explains that "In a country, in which 'society' was given no political outlets, the emergence of such a group was inevitable."<sup>13</sup> The Russian poet, writer, and revolutionist, Anatoli Lunacharsky, (appointed by Lenin to be the first People's Commissar of Education), gave a

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<sup>11</sup>Robert Ulich, The Education of Nations, A Comparison in Historical Perspective (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1961), 260.

<sup>12</sup>Pipes, Russian Revolution, 122.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 122-123.

compelling first-hand view of the oppressed and anachronistic conditions of tsarist Russia that led to the rise of opposing movements:

When a government is very rotten, when it is behind the times, when it is a monstrosity, as it was in Russia, then such a government displays the greatest possible distrust of even its own officers. When the intelligentsia is in every respect repressed, when the country is kept in such a state of ignorance, of barbarity, that a doctor cannot earn a living although there are no doctors, that writers live in Siberia and are forbidden to write although there are no journalists available--then it is only natural that the intelligentsia too should be against the government.<sup>14</sup>

Among the intelligentsia were rational and moderate reformers, but also radicals, anarchists, and nihilists. The radicals called for the complete destruction of the sociopolitical structure. Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), one such radical anarchist, believed in fanatical acts, and urged violence, murder, revolts, riots, and revolution as the means to achieve human freedom. Bakunin wanted to destroy all institutional structures.

By contrast, the Narodnik ("people's movement") consisted of students who, during the 1870s, exchanged lecture rooms for peasant life, calling this a "going to the people crusade," to educate the rural masses about the inequities of government, in the hope that they would change people's thinking through enlightened persuasion. The students were bewildered to find the peasants resistant and

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<sup>14</sup>Anatoli Lunacharsky, On Education. Selected Articles and Speeches (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981), 92.

unresponsive to thoughts of change, and many of them were persecuted by the authorities. The belief of the people in their "little father," the tsar, remained unshaken.<sup>15</sup>

The most determined radical activists were a secret organization called the People's Will. Formed in 1879, members turned to systematic terror to fight the tsarist regime and destroying the masses' fascination and reverence for the tsar. The emergence of the People's Will marked a watershed in the history of the Russian Revolution because, as Pipes points out, it established violence as a legitimate instrument of politics. Other forms of bringing about change such as educating and persuasion were considered ineffectual.<sup>16</sup>

At the turn of the twentieth century, Russia's political parties began to form: In 1902, the Party of Socialists-Revolutionaries, tracing their origin to the radical People's Will, emerged with a penchant for anarchism and committed to terrorist methods. A year later, their rivals, the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, formed. The Bolsheviks constituted the radical majority of the Social Democratic (Marxist) Party, with Lenin as its leader. In 1905, the Constitutional-Democratic Party formed, a liberal group that favored democratic franchise,

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<sup>15</sup>Gutok, Western Educational Experience, 339, 340. Pipes, Russian Revolution, 141.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 143.

parliamentary rule, liberty and equality for all citizens. Pipes observes that at this time, the majority of the population had little appreciation and understanding of these liberal values.<sup>17</sup> With the exception of the liberals, these opposition socialist parties promoted and incited revolution. Pipes gives a brilliant summary of the climate in Russia prior to the revolution:

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were in Russia thousands of men and women committed to fundamental change. A good part of them were "professional revolutionaries," a novel breed who dedicated their lives to plotting political violence. They . . . might quarrel among themselves about strategy and tactics--whether to engage in terror, whether to "socialize" or "nationalize" the land, whether to treat the peasants as an ally or as an enemy of the worker. But they were at one on the central issue: that there was to be no accommodation, no compromise with the existing social, economic and political regime, that it had to be destroyed, root and branch, not only in Russia but throughout the world.<sup>18</sup>

On October 25, 1917, Lenin's Bolsheviks seized the Winter Palace and overthrew Kerensky's coalition government established in the preceding July. The Bolshevik Party thus became Russia's absolute basis of political authority. Lenin had made it his task (though this was never truly realized) to render Marxism into a concrete system of economic and political thought and to transfer all power to the masses of the people. According to Pipes, the vast majority of Russians had no idea of what had really happened

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 146-47.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 152.

and eyewitnesses reported that the population reacted to the collapse of government with total apathy. "The man on the street seemed to feel that it made no difference who was in charge since things could not possibly get any worse."<sup>19</sup>

Three years after the revolution, Lunacharsky confirmed the listless reaction to the revolution with these words:

At that time the bourgeois thought that the Russian Revolution in general was just an episode, an experiment. Only now have they started to howl about the Bolshevik menace, now they think that it is not an experiment, but a storm on a world scale that may be their ruin.<sup>20</sup>

Makarenko's initial reaction to the revolution was like that of the vast majority. At the time of the Bolshevik overthrow he was director of a railway school in a small town, Kriukov, in the Ukraine. As he himself never spoke much about the Russian Revolution, it becomes necessary to turn to another--and major--source for information on Makarenko's response to this event, to his younger brother, Vitalii.<sup>21</sup> Vitalii affirmed that Makarenko was surprised by the political upheavals in 1917 and by the October Revolution. According to him, the Makarenko family had only heard of the Bolsheviks and their activities after the Bolshevik uprising. Similarly, no one in the household

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 505.

<sup>20</sup>Lunacharsky, On Education, 209.

<sup>21</sup>Vitalii's story and testimony will be discussed in detail in some of the following chapters, particularly in chapter two.

had heard of Lenin before October 1917. The Makarenko family was not in the least revolutionary minded. The father, a railway employee of Imperial Russia, was utterly devoted to the tsar. He understood nothing of politics and was altogether opposed to the revolution, believing that there would be bloodshed, destruction, and that nothing new would come of it. Vitalii himself, after serving as an officer in the Russian Army, joined the White Army (anti-Bolshevik forces) and fled Russia in 1920.

According to Vitalii, Anton, together with the rest of his family and friends, as well as eighty percent of the population whom they knew, wanted neither disruption nor upheaval of the existing order, only certain reforms. They dreamt of such changes as institutionalizing parliamentary rule, casting secret ballots, expropriating large land holdings and distributing property among the peasants, as well as general compulsory school attendance; freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, and the right to strike were also desired.

Anton, between fifteen and sixteen was persuaded by a school friend to become active as a revolutionary. According to Vitalii, his brother declined, possibly echoing his father's views, by saying that he did not believe in anarchy and chaos and that he was not suited to throw bombs at ministers. Here he may also have made reference to the People's Will movement and their terrorist tactics. From



all accounts, Makarenko, early on, turned away from politics and concentrated on his career as a teacher and aspiring writer.

Makarenko left scant indications of his own relationship to events of the October Revolution. The best known of his comments was made in a commemorative article following Gorky's death in 1936 (almost two decades after the coup d'état), in which he said that while the October Revolution had opened unforeseen prospects for him as a teacher and possibilities that had made him and his colleagues quite giddy with enthusiasm, he had no opportunity to get carried away, as he had to concentrate on the urgent and difficult task of establishing a colony for juvenile offenders.

Although Makarenko's interests were firmly centered on teaching, he still was open to social change. As the Marburg Makarenko researcher Götz Hillig explained, one can assume that Makarenko saluted the process of democratization as it was launched in 1917 with the February Revolution, but that it is unlikely that he welcomed the Bolshevik seizure of power the following October.<sup>22</sup>

From Makarenko's writings it becomes clear that the Russian author and playwright Maxim Gorky most significantly influenced his relationship to his time and to the

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<sup>22</sup>Götz Hillig, "Der schwierige Weg zum Kommunismus," [The difficult path to communism], in Hundert Jahre, 210.

revolutionary climate. Gorky saw the great historical significance of the early 1920s and the fresh opportunities to build a new world. In much of Makarenko's writings, there is an attitude of shattering the old world, which he perceived irredeemably corrupt, of hope for social renewal, and of a readiness to create a better and more ethical society. It is fair to say that Makarenko identified with the new ideals of the revolution, but that he disapproved of the tactics used by the new regime.

### Early Soviet Education

The Russian Revolution, that was to "smash" the tsarist order (Marx's words), also prompted a revolution in education. The bankruptcy of the tsarist school was all too clear to the Bolsheviks, who believed that the inherited educational system was overdue for a revolutionary shake-up. Through policies that had blatantly ignored the needs of the Russian masses, the tsarist system was characterized by appalling inequalities of educational opportunity that left the imperial provinces abandoned and in a state of profound backwardness. Since the 1880s, the Orthodox Church had been deeply engaged in popular education, stressing nationalistic values and loyalty to the tsar. Nadezhda Krupskaya, Lenin's wife and a prominent educator in her own right, gave a telling summary of the suppressed and anachronistic practices of the Tsarist school:

The public school was under the strict surveillance of the priest, the tight-fisted rich peasant, and the policeman. The teacher was always under suspicion. Prayers and religious instruction filled most of the school time. Icons were the principal equipment. All the text books were permeated with a spirit of bigotry. Histories were written in servile loyalty to the authorities. Discussing the realities of life was taboo. Nature study was viewed with suspicion. . . . There was no literature nor were periodicals printed in the languages of the national minorities. No school

was conducted in any language except Russian.<sup>23</sup>

The new regime was faced with the formidable problem of coping with deeply rooted and widespread illiteracy. At the beginning of the 20th century hardly a quarter of the population could read and write, making this, in the words of Oskar Anweiler and Klaus Meyer, "one of the darkest stains on the face of Russia."<sup>24</sup> Forty seven nationalities did not have their own alphabet. General and compulsory education had never existed in Imperial Russia. The Bolsheviks were confronted with the necessity of completely restructuring the old system and with laying the foundations for a modern Soviet school plan. They had, after all, no less goal in mind than the radical redesigning of nation, economy, and culture, as well as the creation of a new man.<sup>25</sup>

The formation of early Soviet education did not proceed smoothly and underwent several stages of development before, in the early 1930s, it was consolidated under Stalin's dictatorship. As is evident through his writings, Makarenko was well aware that he had been in the midst of a radical transformation of society and of schooling.

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<sup>23</sup>Cited in Lucy L. W. Wilson, The New Schools of New Russia, (New York: Vanguard Press, 1928), 11.

<sup>24</sup>Oskar Anweiler und Klaus Meyer, Die Sowjetische Bildungspolitik seit 1917. Dokumente und Texte [Soviet educational policy since 1917. Documents and texts] (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1961), 21.

<sup>25</sup>Pipes, Russian Revolution, xxi.

Initially, after the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917, no one as yet knew how to build a new school system that was of Soviet character. Revolutionary enthusiasm and communist ideology were not equipped to struggle with the overwhelming problems of illiteracy and ignorance among the vast majority of the Russian people. Marx had left little specific guidelines on education and his theories were subject to numerous interpretations. He had however developed the principle of "polytechnic education," envisioning that the future school would advance "an education which, in the case of every child over a certain age, will combine productive labor with instruction and physical culture, not only as a means for increasing social production, but as the only way of producing fully developed social beings."<sup>26</sup> Thus, after the revolution, the Russian Communist Party (as the Bolsheviks soon called themselves) demanded polytechnic education and closer links between instruction and productive labor, launching polytechnic education as the central focus of the future Soviet schools.

In general however, there was great uncertainty among Soviet political and educational leaders as to what exactly should constitute Soviet education. Though all educational institutions came under government control after the revolution, questions of content and method remained

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<sup>26</sup>Karl Marx, cited in Maurice J. Shore, Soviet Education Its Psychology and Philosophy (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1947), 52.

open for over a decade. Lenin's words to Anatoli Lunacharsky, whom, in 1917, he had appointed to the post of People's Commissar of Education, give a glimpse of the general uncertainty: "I cannot say that I have [conceived] a well thoughtout system of ideas regarding the first steps of the educational revolution . . . I think you ought to consult with Nadezhda Konstantinova (Krupskaya). . . . She has thought a lot about these things."<sup>27</sup> Lunacharsky himself, pondering how to build a new educational system, admitted: "But how? No one knew, neither in detail nor in many other important matters."<sup>28</sup>

During the first decade of Communist rule, under uncommonly difficult conditions, Lunacharsky and Krupskaya were the leading figures of Soviet education. Both had idealistic, if not utopian goals for the new schools. Because their views significantly shaped early Soviet educational aspirations and also touched Makarenko's life as a teacher, some of the main themes of their thinking shall briefly be highlighted.

Lunacharsky (1875-1933), an idealist and man of great culture, (he had saved artistic masterpieces in the midst of the revolution) was concerned with the

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<sup>27</sup>Vladimir Ilich Lenin, cited in Isabella Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko. Ein Erzieher und Schriftsteller in der Sowjetgesellschaft [A. S. Makarenko. An educator and writer in Soviet society] (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1965), 116-117.

<sup>28</sup>Lunacharsky, cited in Ibid., 117.

"exceptionally urgent question of how to bring forth the new man."<sup>29</sup> In his lecture, "Education of the New Man" he explained that "true education means . . . the education of a new kind of human being."<sup>30</sup> Lunacharsky believed that human beings had been deformed under the old society, and he clearly articulated his vision of the new man: "We want to educate a human being as harmonious as possible morally and spiritually, one who has received a full general education and can easily acquire full skill in some particular field."<sup>31</sup> To achieve this goal, Lunacharsky defined the task of the new schools as passing on knowledge and culture and "our own communist ideas" on the one hand, and, on the other, shielding the child from becoming "infected" by "old" [prerevolutionary] ideas.<sup>32</sup>

Krupskaya (1869-1939) had descended from a family that was influenced by progressive social ideas and had studied Western educational systems during her forced exile abroad. She too was particularly concerned with the all-around development of the individual child, a process she believed could best be achieved in a school that was organized on a collective, meaning communal, basis. A student of Marx, she promoted the idea of polytechnical and

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<sup>29</sup>Lunacharsky, On Education, 222.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 222.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 162.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 245.

labor-oriented education that would prepare pupils for socially useful work.<sup>33</sup> Krupskaya also championed the formation of the Komsomols, (the All-Union Leninist Communist Union of Youth), an organization that played a significant and controversial role in Makarenko's postrevolutionary career.<sup>34</sup> Krupskaya and Lunacharsky were supported by a small group of pedagogues who were initially partyless, for example, S. T. Sackij and Paul Blonsky, the latter becoming instrumental in advancing "pedology" (a "scientific" educational movement) in Soviet Russia. Though it is not certain to what extent Makarenko was familiar with the writings and speeches of Lunacharsky and Krupskaya, it is evident from his life and work that he shared their revolutionary ideals to create a new man, to establish education within a communal or collective setting, and to build a better, community oriented society. As an educator, he was wholeheartedly committed to participation in these tasks.

In an effort to cast off the shackles of the past, the first years of Soviet rule brought about radical changes in all areas of education. Early Soviet educators sought to

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<sup>33</sup>Nadezhda Krupskaya, On Labour-Oriented Education and Instruction (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), 20.

<sup>34</sup>The Komsomol was organized for youths between the ages of fourteen and twenty-three. The Young Pioneers, a branch of the Union of Communist Youth, enlisted children aged ten to sixteen, and the Little Octobrists, children between eight and ten.



distance themselves from all features of tsarist education and to liberalize schools from residues of the inherited system. To make way for the new Soviet education, a series of decrees and notices were issued. For example, one decree called for the separation of state and church, and for fully secularizing the schools. Another abolished grades and examinations that had traditionally controlled access to higher education. Paramount in these reform efforts was the goal of educating the Russian masses. In a proclamation, issued October 29, 1917, a few days after the revolution, Lunacharsky announced: "In a land governed by illiteracy and ignorance, every democratic power in the area of education must make its first aim the fight against such darkness."<sup>35</sup> The proclamation called for full eradication of illiteracy, the introduction of free and compulsive education for all people, and for the organization of a unified school system, later to become known as the "Unified Workers's School."<sup>36</sup> In his first annual report, Lunacharsky explained this new concept:

"The unity of this school should be understood in two ways: first, that the class divisions are abolished and the school adopts a continuous grade system. In principle, every child of the Russian Republic enters a school of an identical type and has the same chances as

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<sup>35</sup>Lunacharsky, cited in Anweiler und Meyer, Sowjetische Bildungspolitik, 56.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

every other to complete the higher education."<sup>37</sup>

On October 16, 1918, two documents were published by the Soviet authorities delineating the fundamental principles of the Unified Workers' School that, according to Anweiler and Meyer, are among the most impressive documents of early Soviet pedagogical reform, introducing the most progressive and modern theories of child and school. According to these new principles, the school was no longer a place for study but a place for life; no longer would there be a "book" school, but schools based on productive labor, linking schools to the world and creating social beings; no longer would the school be an isolated institution for instruction but a community for all.<sup>38</sup> These guidelines and principles further provided for pupil self-government, for the student's spontaneous and independent activity, for a brotherly and loving relationship between student and teacher, and for abolishing old forms of discipline, coercion, and punishment.<sup>39</sup>

Because of their boldness, these principles, according to Anweiler and Meyer, stirred attention and admiration abroad. John Dewey, having visited Soviet Russia after the revolution, was profoundly impressed. He thought

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<sup>37</sup>Georg Z. F. Bereday, William W. Brickman, and Gerald H. Read, The Changing Soviet School (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), 51-52.

<sup>38</sup>Anweiler und Meyer, Sowjetische Bildungspolitik, 27.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 66-89.

that the Russian Revolution had freed powerful educational forces that the communists had channelled toward social, industrial, and cultural goals. Anweiler observed that the idea of labor schools, of industrial instruction and polytechnical education, of student self-government and socially productive labor also were principal ideas in Dewey's own reforms.<sup>40</sup>

In one of the above mentioned official documents of October 1918, entitled, "Basic Principles of the Unified Workers' School," Lunacharsky voiced his idealistic educational intentions, underscoring the social aspect in education. Some of his statements reflect Makarenko's general views on how children should be educated for communal life, which he began to develop in the 1920s. For instance, Lunacharsky declared:

The educating school must strive to the degree possible to remove in the souls of children those features of egoism that are inherited from the past. It shall prepare for the future and shall, already at the school bench, endeavour to weld together firm collectives, and, to the highest degree possible, develop the ability for community experience and solidarity.<sup>41</sup>

Lunacharsky believed, and this view was shared by Makarenko, that by forming firm collectives, and by becoming

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<sup>40</sup>Oskar Anweiler, "Die Wirkung der sowjetischen Revolutionspädagogik und die Vermittlerrolle der Pädagogik A. S. Makarenkos" [The effect of Soviet revolutionary pedagogy and the mediating role of A. S. Makarenko's pedagogy] Pädagogik und Schule in Ost und West 4 (April 1969): 105. This journal is henceforth cited as PSOW.

<sup>41</sup>Lunacharsky, cited in Anweiler und Meyer, Sowjetische Bildungspolitik, 81.

community minded, the individuality of the child would not be restricted in its free unfolding. As he explained:

Individualization shall not thereby be constricted. Personality in a socialist culture is also the highest treasure. However, personality can develop its natural tendencies in their fullness only within the harmony and solidarity of a communion of equals [meaning, of like mind]. Individualism in the school [the tsarist school] promotes the attempt to put oneself in first place and to exploit others for one's own self [interest]. Socialist education unites the striving to form soul collectives with differentiated individualization, enabling the personality to experience pride in the development of all its faculties and pride in its service to the whole."

Makarenko's whole orientation to education was shaped by similar impulses and intentions. He too wanted to develop in his pupils a sense of social responsibility and a harmonization of personal and societal interests. It is safe to assume that Makarenko would not have disagreed with Lunacharsky's ideas, although he fervently opposed many of the permissive and liberal premises that in the 1920s were officially authorized under Lunacharsky's direction. Makarenko, in working with neglected and law-breaking youth, had learned from practical experience that lenient methods and gentle practices were hopelessly ineffective. Because of the nature of his students, spontaneous activities had to give way to disciplined approaches and passive teacher observation to planned guidance and stern authority. Makarenko found that he could not educate without using discipline and punishment. He rejected the tender-hearted,

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"Ibid., 81-82.

child-centered theories issued by the Narkompros, (People's Commissariat of Education). The authorities in turn were critical of Makarenko's stern practices, repudiating them as "un-Soviet." Krupskaya openly criticized Makarenko's austere educational methods and condemned his use of punishment. This resulted in serious consequences for Makarenko, which will be discussed in chapter five.

Considering the social and economic reality during the years following the political upheavals of 1917, it is not surprising that many of the goals for a democratic universal education could not be met as soon as was hoped. Ideals and the harsh realities of the revolution's aftermath were too far apart. It would take well over a decade before the new republic had an organized and regular educational school system accessible to all. Not until the 1930s did universal compulsory education become fully established.

In discarding the old education system, Soviet educational leaders willingly opened their minds to the pedagogical ideas and culture of Western Europe and the United States. In the 1920s, as Gerald Gutek points out, Russian educators "borrowed extensively" from such pedagogical thinkers as Montessori, Kerschensteiner, Dewey, Kilpatrick, and Thorndike.<sup>43</sup> In repudiating the old and bookish methods, they looked for new approaches that would support their belief in learning through doing. Many Soviet

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<sup>43</sup>Gutek, Western Educational Experience, 349.

ideas and practices were evidently of American origin, such as the Dalton Plan, and the Project Method. Ulich summarizes the intentions of the early Soviet educational authorities thus:

Russian leaders . . . were anxious to integrate with their manual labor principle every method that seemed to be progressive, pragmatic, and based on team work or on the combination of physical and mental development. . . . John Dewey with his emphasis on the interrelation of school and community and on learning by doing, Mr. Collings with his project system, and Miss Parkhurst with her Dalton Plan were considered to offer adoptable schemes for world-saving communist education."

In 1923, the People's Commissariat of Education introduced what was known as a "complex" program, a project curriculum that, according to Bowen, strongly resembled Kilpatrick's "project method."<sup>45</sup> This program was intended to bring vibrancy into school learning and link instruction to life. Essentially, these programs focussed on the study of nature, labor, and society. Knowledge was no longer divided into separate subjects but connected by a central theme. In the early 1920s, Makarenko adapted the complex method to his own situation. Later he rejected it. E. Dneprov gives a succinct overview of this method, highlighting the educational aims of the early Soviet pedagogues:

The central feature in the programs was to be the

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"Ulich, Education of Nations, 269.

<sup>45</sup>James E. Bowen, Soviet Education: Anton Makarenko and the Years of Experiment (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), 141.

working activities of human beings, studied in connection with nature . . . and with social life. . . Thus . . . the main aim of instruction would be attained--perception of the phenomena of life in their interconnection and interaction. All the material for the primary school was arranged in these programmes on the principle "from the child to the world."<sup>46</sup>

Possibly influenced by the child-centered thinking of Westerners, Soviet educators, notably Blonsky, advanced a new psychological orientation called "pedology," which focussed on the child's biological and psychological development. The intention was to apply this knowledge to educational methods that would further the pupil's physical and mental growth. The emphasis was on individual testing and measurements. Makarenko, more oriented toward his pupil's social progress, disagreed with what he considered to be excessive focus on the single person. He refused to learn about the child's development through experimentation, and to base educational methods on test results. He believed that educational methods could be derived only from concrete experience. In his writings and lectures Makarenko took a firm stand against the pedologists and against the Narkompros who favored pedology. During the 1920s and early 1930s, when this popular movement was officially endorsed, Makarenko was out of favor with the educational authorities.

Anweiler and Meyer, in a significant observation, point out that the idealistic endeavors of Lunacharsky and his followers stood in irreconcilable tension with the

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<sup>46</sup>E. Dneprov, in Lunacharsky, On Education, 307.

political intentions of the Bolshevik Party. In their program of 1919, the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) had linked general education with communist propaganda.<sup>47</sup> Lenin, who had taken a guarded posture toward the progressive ideas and experimental methods of the 1920s, viewed education as an essential part in the revolutionary struggle. He saw schools as instrumental in preparing a classless society and to re-educating a rising generation in the spirit of communism. According to Lunacharsky, Lenin used to say that it was precisely in the schools that the old world would be transformed.<sup>48</sup>

The period of free experimentation was not to last. In the early 1930s, under Stalin, huge economic changes, including five-year plans and collectivization (expropriation of all land and its products by the state), had an impact on all spheres of life. The changed political climate was not without consequence to education. Stalin, even more than Lenin, saw education and culture primarily as tools to serve political and economic interests. Under his dictatorship schools became politicized. In 1928, Stalin called for the creation of new cadres for the socialization of agriculture and the development of industry. Under the new policies, the country needed scientists, well-trained

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<sup>47</sup>Anweiler und Meyer, Sowjetische Bildungspolitik, 24; see also 91-92 and 92 -93.

<sup>48</sup>Lunacharsky, On Education, 227.



engineers, and skilled technicians. Stalin had no sympathy with progressive schools and experimental methods.

Dissatisfaction with education was becoming widespread; charges were made that schools had neglected to teach fundamental knowledge. Teachers and parents complained about undisciplined students and their lack of preparation for higher education. Popular methods from the 1920s (e.g. the Dalton Plan, the Project Method, and the "complex" method) were criticized for not providing sound, basic knowledge and for not instilling disciplined and systematic work habits. Just as early Soviet educators had repudiated rigid tsarist teaching methods, so Stalin, a decade later, wanted to purge Soviet education of its "free" methods.

When Lunacharsky was replaced by General Andrei S. Bubnov, a commander of the Red Army and a favorite of Stalin, a new era in Soviet education began. Modern methods were abandoned as the country's leaders, with new political goals in mind, felt they no longer could afford the luxury of educational experimentation. Formal schooling was reintroduced, and teachers concentrated on conventional methods and a subject matter curriculum. To meet the new priorities to produce highly trained experts in science and technology, the demand was for basic skills and discipline, and a solid grounding in fundamental knowledge. In the 1930s, the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a

series of decrees to revise all primary and secondary school courses. Schools were required to apply themselves more seriously to instruction and to prepare students for higher education; to strengthen school discipline and to restore teacher authority; to bring back textbooks for the purpose of acquiring systematic knowledge, and to reinstate the system of grading. In 1936, these sweeping educational changes were sealed by a decree that abolished pedology, branding it as anti-Marxist. All testing was discontinued. The power of the Communist Party became predominant in the educational affairs of the country as schools came increasingly under party direction and control. Stalin's dictatorship had a paralyzing effect on Soviet education, which in its beginnings had enjoyed relatively wide freedom.

As progressive education declined and political leaders demanded a return to disciplined study and conduct, as well as to methods that would produce a disciplined and purposeful "new man," Makarenko's ideas and practices were no longer regarded as "un-Soviet." His demanding and strict educational approaches coincided with the new thinking of the 1930s. Although Makarenko was no longer an outsider, never during his lifetime did he win the universal acclaim that was heaped on him after his death.

### The Besprizorniki

To assess Makarenko's general educational ideas and their applicability to a nontotalitarian society, one must take into account the peculiar nature of his students, the besprizorniki. It was the besprizorniki, uprooted, ignorant of norms, alienated from society, and often affectless, who challenged Makarenko to search for fresh approaches to education and upbringing and to find new meaning in customary practices (for example in discipline and punishment) in order to transform their asocial and deviant traits and restore the healthy natures of these young people in whom he wholeheartedly believed.

The Russian term besprizorniki, singular besprizornik is commonly translated "unsupervised," "uncared for," "not looked after," "neglected," "homeless ones," "abandoned." Some translations used the English expression "waif," or "stray." It is, according to James Bowen, difficult to find a precise English term that fully captures the flavor of the original.<sup>49</sup> Sara Lehrman explains that besprizornik does not imply "delinquent," although many of them had broken the law. She stresses that the Russian word

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<sup>49</sup>Bowen Soviet Education, 50-51.

has no derogatory meaning, that it was used in a spirit of compassion, even by authorities who associated with it neglect rather than delinquency.<sup>50</sup>

The besprizorniki began to appear in unprecedented numbers in Russia after the devastations created by warring armies during World War I (1914-1918), the Russian Revolution (1917), and a bitter Civil War (1918-1921) had ravaged the country, destroyed homes, uprooted families, and rendered millions of Russian children orphaned, homeless, and adrift. For years, these children were, in Leonard Gerson's words, "Soviet Russias's most pathetic apparition and one of its most serious problems."<sup>51</sup>

Exact numbers of besprizorniki could never be ascertained. Official Russian estimates of homeless children varied enormously. According to the Large Soviet Encyclopedia (third edition) already in 1921 there were four to six million children needing direct help from the state.<sup>52</sup> In 1922, Epstein, the Deputy People's Commissar of Education, estimated that there were approximately seven

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<sup>50</sup>Sara M. Lehrman, "The Pedagogical Ideas of Anton Semenovitch Makarenko" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1971), 2-3.

<sup>51</sup>Lennard D. Gerson, The Secret Police in Lenin's Russia (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), 123.

<sup>52</sup>Robert Conquest, The Harvest of Sorrow (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 289.

million besprizorniki.<sup>53</sup> The Large Soviet Encyclopedia reported that by the mid-1930s, the number of children without means of existence had diminished and that the crisis had been essentially eradicated.<sup>54</sup>

Robert Conquest, investigating the horrors wreaked on the Russian peasantry under Stalin between 1929 and 1933, found numerous official records of homeless children during this period, thus contradicting the Large Soviet Encyclopedia's view that homeless children were merely a phenomenon of the 1920s.<sup>55</sup> Stalin's "dekulakization" (the killing or deportation of millions of peasants recalcitrant to the party's forced collectivization) and then, from 1932 to 1933, the forced starvation (also called "terror famine") inflicted on the collectivized peasantry of the Ukraine (sometimes called Stalin's "revolution from above"), resulted in millions of deaths and led to a recrudescence of the phenomenon of orphaned and homeless children.

Fred E. Beal, an American who called himself a fugitive, and who had travelled to the Ukraine in the 1930s, gave an eyewitness account of this tragedy:

Heart-rending was the condition of the great swarms of homeless children let loose by Stalin policy. It should be remembered that this new crop of waifs was not inherited from the Tsarist regime, from the early period of the revolution. The Stalinists have a way of

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<sup>53</sup>Bowen Soviet Education, 47.

<sup>54</sup>Conquest, Harvest of Sorrow, 289.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 289.

blaming the Tsar and the World War of nearly two decades ago for the latest wave of homeless children. . . . Their parents had been starved to death, shot, sent to concentration camps far away, or were still roaming over the land lost to their children forever.<sup>56</sup>

Other travelers to Soviet Russia have described their encounters with these homeless children. Lucy Wilson, American educator and author, wrote that every visitor would notice in the streets, on trains, or on street-cars numbers of inert children, "indescribably dirty, ragged, often with old and evil faces, quick to beg, alert to steal."<sup>57</sup>

Soon after their swarming appearances, the besprizorniki became a common theme in Soviet novels, reports, newspaper articles, and scientific studies. Makarenko felt that their image was generally misrepresented and often romanticized and that the "real waifs," as he had known them for some fifteen years, did not resemble the wits or philosophers, the anarchists or destroyers, or the Byronic heroes that the besprizorniki had been portrayed as

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<sup>56</sup>Fred E. Beal, Word From Nowhere (London: The Right to Book Club, 1938), 255-56. Makarenko, in working with the besprizorniki between 1920 and 1935, certainly came into close contact with both "crops of waifs" and knew first-hand of their dire circumstances. There is however no record, testimony, or any other evidence to indicate whether, or to what extent, he knew of the Ukrainian forced famine of 1932-1933. In his own writings and lectures he remained mute on this point. Dr. Ewald Ammende, a witness of the Great Famine of 1932-1933, observed that the OGPU (secret police) monitored every local citizen's word spoken to strangers and that a careless remark meant risking one's life. In Ewald Ammende, Human Life in Russia (Cleveland: John T. Zubal, Inc., 1984. First Reprint Edition), 188.

<sup>57</sup>Wilson, New Schools, 100.

in literature. F. Lilge gives a more authentic account of the besprizorniki's physical and psychological attributes, one that parallels Makarenko's own observations:

The besprizornye, undernourished and diseased, lived by begging, theft, and prostitution. Occasionally they carried out organized banditry, and committed more serious crimes as well. In winter they rode the trains to the Ukraine and the Crimea. Infested with vermin, and clothed in stinking rags, they slept in cellars, sewers, abandoned houses, freight cars on sidings, and any other shelter they could find. Most of them were accustomed to the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. It is probable that the greater number died of famine and epidemics, that others grew up into adult criminals, and only a small minority were rehabilitated.<sup>58</sup>

As the problem of abandoned children and youth became more insistent and conspicuous, the Soviet government began to look for measures to help these unprotected and destitute vagabonds. Beginning in the early 1920s, numerous government agencies and commissions increased their efforts to alleviate this immense social dilemma. Many children's homes, orphanages, communes, and labor colonies were organized, but still they could accomodate only a small percentage of the children without family or community. The colony for homeless children that Makarenko was asked to direct in 1920, was an example of these efforts. Many children escaped from these establishments because of their unbearable conditions.

Gerson describes how early in 1921, Felix

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<sup>58</sup>Frederic Lilge, A. S. Makarenko: An Analysis of His Educational Ideas in the Context of Soviet Society (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 14.

Dzerzhinsky, chairman of the "Cheka" (Soviet secret police), himself responsible for the death of countless counter-revolutionaries, approached Anatoly Lunacharsky (Commissar of Education) with a proposal to devote some of his and the Cheka's energy to the struggle against homeless children.<sup>59</sup> Dzerzhinsky wanted the Cheka to aid all Soviet agencies that were responsible for assisting orphaned youth by providing material resources and security. During 1921-1922, the Cheka had helped the Commission To Improve The Life Of Children dispense food and clothing to some five million destitute children.<sup>60</sup> The Cheka was said to having made personal sacrifices on behalf of the besprizorniki by contributing from their own salaries toward establishing a number of children's homes. By 1928, according to Gerson, there were thirty-five labor communes for the besprizorniki established by members of the secret police, credited with bettering the life of thousands of homeless youngsters.<sup>61</sup> Dzerzhinsky, who was merciless in his role as persecutor of uncountable counter-revolutionaries, had a curious love for children and worried about their well-being. Noteworthy are some excerpts from a letter to his sister, written in 1902:

I don't know why it is that I love children more than anyone else. In their company my bad mood immediately disappears. . . . At times when I am despondent I dream

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<sup>59</sup>Gerson, Secret Police, 123.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 125.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 127.



that I have taken charge of a child abandoned on a doorstep, that I devote myself wholly to him and we are both happy. I live for him, feel him near me, feel that he loves me with that child love in which there is nothing false. . . . But it is only a dream.<sup>62</sup>

Makarenko was very familiar with the Cheka's campaign to provide for Russia's homeless children. In 1927, he had been asked by the OGPU (new name for the Cheka) to organize the Felix Dzerzhinsky Labor Commune, established in memory of Felix Dzerzhinsky through personal donations by the Cheka, and from 1928 to 1935 Makarenko was fully engaged in this task. His confounding admiration for the Cheka as well as his serious conflicts with this group are discussed in chapters five and eight.

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 122.

## CHAPTER II

### MAKARENKO'S LIFE

In 1928, following a visit to the Gorky Colony in the Poltava Gubernia (a district in the Ukraine), Maxim Gorky shared his impressions of the director of the colony, Anton Semyonovitch Makarenko:

He is externally a stern and taciturn man . . . with a large nose and sharp, intelligent eyes; he looks like a soldier and a village school master 'with ideas.' He speaks in a hoarse and broken voice as if he were struggling with a cold; his movements are slow but he is always there at the right moment, sees everything, knows each of the children and can characterize each in five words, providing, as it were, an instant photograph of the child's character. He obviously feels the need to unnoticeably show his kindness to a youngster, to have a friendly word for each one of them, to give a smile, to caress their closely cropped heads.<sup>1</sup>

With these carefully chosen words, Gorky seems to have captured the dual aspect of Makarenko's personality, the peculiar union of his sinister military bearing and his convincingly human and genuinely pedagogical attitude.

What follows is the story of Makarenko's life and work with the besprizorniki (homeless youths, many of them

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<sup>1</sup>Maxim Gorky, "Arbeitskolonien für Kinder" [Labor colonies for children]. Quoted in Götz Hillig, ed., Makarenko in Deutschland 1927-1967.

delinquents, abandoned during the 1917 revolution and the civil War of 1918-1921). Reticent by nature, Makarenko did not communicate much of his own life to others.<sup>2</sup> John Dunstan observed, that those who have read Makarenko's The Road to Life, that "spirited rambling autobiographical story of youngsters reclaimed from vagabondage and crime through his work at the Gorky Colony and the nascent Dzerzhinsky Commune in the Northern Ukraine of the 1920's," will be left with the impression of a "humorous, warm, excitable, courageous and persistent man whose exactingness towards his charges was combined with a devotion which bred devotion."<sup>3</sup> Based on this self-portrait and on other autobiographic comments, as well as on memoirs and reminiscences by pupils and friends, Makarenko's biographers shaped a public image portraying him as a man of humble social origin, the son of a poor and illiterate railroad worker who became a celebrated Soviet educator and writer. They did not say much about Makarenko's family, or about his early childhood, his adolescent years and young adulthood.

The Marburg researchers Götz Hillig and Siegfried Weitz were able to locate a source to account for this

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<sup>2</sup>For a compilation of autobiographical comments made by Makarenko, see G. Hillig, ed., Makarenko Materialien III [Makarenko Materials III] (Marburg: VVG Verlags- und Vertriebsgemeinschaft, 1973), 31-68. Hereafter cited as MM III.

<sup>3</sup>John Dunstan, "Review Essay: Demythologizing Makarenko." Slavic and European Education Review 2, (1981), 27-28.

hiatus in Makarenko's biography. Through the testimonies of Makarenko's former pupils, they learned that Makarenko had a younger brother, Vitalii, who had emigrated to France after the Revolution. Because of his military career as an officer of the White Army during the Civil War, Vitalii had never been mentioned in Soviet literature.<sup>4</sup> In 1970, Hillig and Weitz traced Vitalii Makarenko to an old-age asylum in Hyeres near Toulon in the South of France. During their visit, Vitalii gave a detailed account of his growing up with Anton in the Ukraine (1895-1919). This visit was followed by an intense correspondence between members of the Marburg Makarenko Department and Vitalii and by their repeated visits to Hyeres. On two occasions, (in 1971 and 1972) Vitalii visited the Makarenko Department in Marburg, where a video-taped colloquy was organized. Eventually, Vitalii was persuaded to write down his memoirs. A fruitful working relationship developed between Vitalii and the Marburg researchers in which Vitalii answered to questions regarding biographical research, archival materials, and memories of contemporaries. The relationship lasted 13

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<sup>4</sup>Vitalii Semenovich Makarenko (1895-1983) had pursued a military career. In 1919, he joined Anton Ivanovich Denikin (1872-1947), tsarist military leader who commanded anti-Bolshevik (White) forces in southern Russia and the Ukraine during the Civil War. After Denikin was defeated by the Red Army in 1920, he was succeeded by tsarist military leader Pyotr N. Wrangel (1878-1928). In November 1920, Vitalii, together with the remnants of the Wrangel army, was evacuated to Constantinople. He made his way to France in 1925 where he lived until his death. See Hillig, ed. MM III, 145-46.

years, until Vitalii's death in 1983, at the age of 88.<sup>5</sup>

Vitalii's memoirs contain detailed information about Makarenko's family and, for the first time, answered questions regarding the social position and political beliefs of his father; the overall milieu in which Makarenko spent his childhood and youth; the relationship between Makarenko and his parents, his peers, and his friends; his love affairs; his interests, readings, and political conceptions; and, finally, his career until 1919 as a teacher. Thus, Vitalii's contributions shed new light on Makarenko's family and fill a gap in our knowledge about his early life and activities.<sup>6</sup>

Vitalii's account embraces almost two thirds of Makarenko's life and the period about which the least was known. He saw his brother for the last time in 1919 when Makarenko was 31 years old. (Makarenko died in 1939 at the age of 51).<sup>7</sup> Hillig points out that testimony of this kind would be highly subjective for Vitalii, being the younger and unknown brother telling about his older, now world-famous brother, would inevitably lead to "certain exaggerations in judgement." However, Hillig maintains that Vitalii's testimony constitutes "most important source

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<sup>5</sup>G. Hillig, "Das Zeugnis Vitalij Makarenkos über seinen Bruder," [Vitalii Makarenko's testimony regarding his brother], in Hundert Jahre, 15-16.

<sup>6</sup>G. Hillig, MM III, 142.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 5.

material."<sup>8</sup> He is joined by Wolfgang Sünkel, Professor of pedagogy at the University of Erlangen (Germany), who characterized Vitalii's statements in these words:

From his memories one learns many dates and facts, much about the family situation, about relatives, neighbors, friends and colleagues, about the sickliness of the child Anton, about housing and work conditions, about the love affairs of the bigger brother, (all his "flames" are cited by name) about the first conflict between the young Makarenko with his father. Above all, however, one learns in an impressive way about moods, atmosphere, attitudes, modes of reactions. Here, in the area of family history, lies the particular value of these memories as a historic source.<sup>9</sup>

Libor Pecha, lecturer of Pedagogy at the University of Olomouc, (Czechoslovakia) has drawn intensively from this source in a recently published (1985) monograph on Makarenko. Pecha states that he could not leave Vitalii's testimony unconsidered, for:

These memories are altogether a proof, how he [Vitalii] was torn by conflicting feelings for his deceased brother. The envy of his fame, his bitterness as an emigrant for having had to leave his homeland behind forever, combined with his political resentment against the revolutionary changes at home dominated his emotions. The author of these memories is compensating by making several accusations toward his brother as well as by emphasizing certain of his shortcomings. Opposite to this stands the manifestation of a great love for his brother and beautiful memories of their shared youth. Relative to several questions, Vitalii's memories represent a unique and irreplaceable testimony; its subjective tone can be easily recognized

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 142.

<sup>9</sup>W. Sünkel, cited in Hillig, "Das Zeugnis Vitalij Makarenkos," in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 18.

and eliminated.<sup>10</sup>

Hillig adds that the value of Vitalii's testimony, in addition to giving new information about the Makarenko family, lies in Vitalii's having conveyed, for the first time, a detailed picture of Makarenko's choice of literature, the scope of his extensive readings, and his wide knowledge, which, in spite of modest schooling, ranked him far above the population of his native Kriukov.<sup>11</sup>

It must be mentioned that the Marburg researchers sought to verify Vitalii's assertions, (" . . . which often confirmed or completed, in many cases corrected the former picture of the early Makarenko.") by studying additional archival sources and by calling on other witnesses.<sup>12</sup>

The sources used for this biography will include primarily two works, both published by the Marburg Makarenko Department: (1) Makarenko Materialien III (Makarenko Materials) (1973), and Hundert Jahre Anton Makarenko (1988). The first contains biographical sources relating to the young Makarenko (the years 1888 to 1920). Its comprehensive documentation consist of four parts: (1) official documents up to 1920, including original documents

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<sup>10</sup>L. Pecha, cited in Hillig, "Das Zeugnis Vitalij Makarenkos," in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 18-19.

<sup>11</sup>G. Hillig, "Das Zeugnis Vitalij Makarenkos, " in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 18.

<sup>12</sup>Hillig, ed., MMM III, 142; Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 22-27.

and a German translation, (2) Makarenko's autobiographical statements from the 1920s and 1930s, (3) the recollections of contemporaries, and (4) Vitalii's account, along with excerpts from correspondence between Vitalii and the Marburg researchers. The book includes many photos of Makarenko and his family and a chronological table of the years 1874 to 1920.

The second work, a centennial commemoration, consists of nineteen contributions from eleven scholars (from five countries), and addresses various biographical aspects of Makarenko's life. I shall also refer to research articles by Hillig and Weitz as well as a comprehensive chronology of Makarenko's life.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Hillig, ed., MM III. For full citation of MM III see note 2 of chapter two; of Hundert Jahre, see chapter one, note 1.



Childhood in Belopole: 1888-1900

Fourteen years before Makarenko was born, his father, Semen Grigorevitch, worked in Kriukov, a suburb of Kremenchug in Poltava Gubernia, (a district in the Ukraine) as a painter in the Kriukov railway workshops of the Kharkov-Nikolaev railroad. There he met Tatyana Mikhailova, a native of Kriukov; they were married in 1875.

Their first daughter Serafima, born in 1878(?), died in infancy. Three years later, in April 1881, a daughter Alexandra was born, just a few months before the young family moved to Belopole in Kharkov Gubernia. In Belopole, three more children followed: Anton (Tosja) in 1888, Natalya (Natasa) in 1891, and Vitalii, the youngest, in 1895.<sup>14</sup> The family lived some two miles from the city in a settlement for railroad workers, which offered railroad workshops, a two-class railroad school, a cemetery, and a grocery. The river Vira ran close by the house of the Avramenkos where the Makarenko family lived.<sup>15</sup>

Anton's birth came as a surprise. His mother

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<sup>14</sup>Zeittafel [Chronological table], in Hillig, ed., MMM III, 279. Hereafter cited as Zeittafel.

<sup>15</sup>Vitalii S. Makarenko, "Erinnerungen an meinen Bruder" [Memoirs of my brother], in Hillig, ed., MM III, 157. Hereafter cited as Erinnerungen.

slipped on ice on her way to fetch water from the well on the morning of March 1, 1888. At 10 o'clock she experienced severe pains and at noon gave birth to Anton, three weeks prematurely. This was kept secret in the family. Anton apparently never knew of his premature arrival and Vitalii learned about it from relatives when he was about eighteen years old. Vitalii explained that no one would have spoken of this anyhow, for Anton was a very weak child needing everybody's support. Mother Tatyana later remembered that both she and Semen Grigorevitch cried as they looked at their tiny, black and wrinkled newborn. The care and nursing for little Tosja, as Makarenko's mother liked to call him, was always troublesome and it became obvious early on that he was a sickly child.

According to Vitalii, Anton began to babble quite early but did not walk until he was eighteen months old, and then only after friends from the carpentry workshops had constructed a little walker on special wheels. Soon after birth Anton suffered from scrofula (a swelling of the neck glands, characterized by suppuration and scar formation), causing his mother many sleepless nights. Many years later, the memory of her hardship and sorrows during that time would bring tears to her eyes. Vitalii remembered how the scrofula caused endless misery to Anton, who was also plagued by angina, gum abscesses, sties, boils and sores on his neck, and earaches. For many years, Anton suffered from

a chronic catarrh and was constantly running to his mother for help in blowing his nose. Thus, according to Vitalii, Anton's infancy and early childhood were one single chain of physical distress. While these ailments were not life threatening, they were, in Vitalii's words, "terribly agonizing." Having a chronic cold caused Anton unending distress, as did his swollen nose, which, in cold weather, turned completely red. Vitalii recalled how Anton was treated with the standard remedies of cod-liver oil and iodoform, and how for years these odors penetrated their house.

To protect Anton from catching colds, he was always warmly wrapped, which, so Vitalii believed, rendered his brother's already weak organism even more delicate and susceptible. Mother Tatyana shouldered the care for Anton, which became a yet heavier burden when she had also to tend Makarenko's sister, who, after falling out of bed, was left paralyzed for the rest of her short life. (She died in 1899 at the age of eight years.) Natalya's condition created a sorrowful atmosphere in the Makarenko home and her death relieved the family's secret despair.<sup>16</sup>

Anton's health stabilized around the age of seven or eight years, though he continued periodically to suffer from abscesses and sties. To conceal the scars caused by boils on his neck, Anton wore particularly high collars. Vitalii

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 157-58, 161.

could not remember his brother ever having participated in children's games or sports, or having joined others playing in the surrounding grainfields or gathering mushrooms and acorns in the nearby forest. Anton did not even go outdoors to enjoy the many animals that belonged to their landlord. In Vitalii's words, "what a splendid past! Yet Anton was not part of it."<sup>17</sup> Instead, Anton spent his time in the kitchen, next to an oil lamp, where he and the landlord's son Kolja Avramenko learned to read the letters of the alphabet by putting a sheet with a hole over the alphabet in an ABC-book and naming the visible letter. Anton was then five years old. Vitalii reflected that "surely, he [Anton] was a quiet, well behaved and calm boy."<sup>18</sup> At the age of seven years, Anton entered the railroad school in Belopole and remained there for the next five years.<sup>19</sup>

Makarenko's early childhood was thus characterized by persistent and painful sickness, isolating him from his lively and adventurous peers and inclining him to a serious way of life in the company of his books. During this time he depended on the continuous care of his mother, who in a "saintly way", as Vitalii put it, devoted herself to this task.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 161, 163.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 163-64.

<sup>19</sup>Zeittafel, 279; see also the reminiscences by I. I. Cernysev, "Erinnerungen an einen Jugendfreund" [Memoirs of an early friend], in Hillig, ed., MM III, 71-72.

### Anton Makarenko's Family

Contrary to Makarenko's own account, (see his Book for Parents, 1937, and his semi-autobiographical novel, Honor, 1937-1938) and certainly to the reports of his biographers, which asserted that he grew up in the family of a poor worker, Vitalii attested that father Semen Grigorevitch was a skilled worker (painter) at the Ukrainian railroads, giving him a privileged social status compared with other workers in prerevolutionary Russia. As Vitalii put it, railroad workers were a proud and well-to-do class.<sup>20</sup>

Makarenko's father was a reticent man who only unwillingly spoke of his past. When questioned by his family, the terse answer was, "There is not much to tell. I have gone through a lot and I don't want to talk about it." Vitalii knew however, that Semen Grigorevitch had come from a line of craftsmen, and that he, an orphan, had been brought up by an aunt. The father never spoke of brothers or sisters, all that "remained a mystery for us." Vitalii concluded that his father's sad childhood had shaped his

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<sup>20</sup>Erinnerungen, 168; G. Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko." Ergebnisse einer biographisch-historischen Untersuchung. [The other Makarenko. Results of a biographic-historical examination]. Zeitschrift für Pädagogik XXVI, 1 (1980), 124-25.

character, making him melancholic and somewhat uncommunicative. These traits were further accentuated by the fact that Semen Grigorevitch invariably appeared exhausted from work and suffered from rheumatism that worsened over the years. Contrary to some of Makarenko's biographers who portrayed his father as illiterate, Semen Grigorevitch could read and write quite fluently. He read the newspaper and subscribed to the journal Niva. His small library included works by Chekhov, Korolenko, Selma Lagerlöf, Maupassant and Cervantes, and other classical and contemporary writers.<sup>21</sup>

Makarenko's mother descended from a noble though impoverished family. Vitalii pictured her as a cheerful woman, thoroughly permeated by a Ukrainian humor that seized on people's comic side. One of her brothers, Sergej, had disappeared, surfacing briefly after thirty-seven years, drunk, debilitated, and covered with tattoos, before vanishing for good. Mother's sister Dunja and her many children were afflicted by a critical heart disease, which led Vitalii to believe that Anton had inherited this illness. Polja, another of his mother's sisters, was Makarenko's godmother. Masculine, stubborn, and willful, she was of a revolutionary mind and criticized the existing social order and the tsarist regime. Makarenko's father, who was loyal to the tsar, broke his customary reserve in

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<sup>21</sup>Erinnerungen, 176, 183.

outspoken opposition to revolution. He knew that bloodshed was inevitable, and pronounced, "They are destroying everything, but they won't build anything new."<sup>22</sup> In 1913, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the Romanov's enthronement, he was declared "honorary citizen" of the Russian Empire.

The Makarenko family, like most in those days, was strongly patriarchal. The children addressed their parents respectfully, using the formal Russian pronoun for "you." Vitalii remembered that he kissed his parents hands after meals. The Makarenko's life was in keeping with their class. They participated in local events such as the annual fair, however, Vitalii explained, neither he nor Anton ever went on a merry-go-round, for "this was a pleasure for the children of the little man."<sup>23</sup> It is interesting that the language spoken at home was Russian, not Ukrainian, a fact that seemed to have a formative effect on Anton, who, for the rest of his life, preferred the Russian language.<sup>24</sup>

According to Vitalii, the family was not religious in any orthodox sense. They disliked the local priest and did not attend church, but Makarenko's father was a pious

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 176, 183, 178-79. Vitalii recalled that the railroad workers (to whom his father belonged) never spoke of or longed for a revolution. Compared to other working groups in prerevolutionary Russia, railroad workers were a well-to-do class.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 180, 183.

<sup>24</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 125.

man, who, in Belopole, had been a church warden. Every morning and evening he stepped before an icon that had been placed in a corner of the living room to say a short prayer. The night before Sundays or religious holidays, a candle was lit before the icon.

The daily life of the Makarenko's proceeded quietly and uneventfully during the early 1900s. Later, changes became apparent when Makarenko's sister Sasa, since married and the mother of two children, came to visit her parents over the Christmas holidays. On one occasion a Christmas tree had been decorated for the children, and Vitalii recalled Anton's instant hostility regarding family affairs and his scorn for Sasa and her daughters. He disappeared the moment they arrived, murmuring something to the effect that these family events were bourgeois and philistine. Anton's disinterest in family concerns elicited a bitter remark from his father, who once revealed his sentiments, saying, "The family simply does not exist for him, he comes here only like going to a hotel, to eat and to change his clothes."<sup>25</sup> Vitalii recalled that he always saw Anton with a book under his arm and that Anton possessed an enormous memory and boundless capacity to assimilate information. Vitalii went so far as to declare that "Anton was, without exaggeration, the most educated person" (among the ten-thousand inhabitants of Kriukov, where the family then

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<sup>25</sup>Erinnerungen, 183, 185.



lived).

Vitalii recalled that his "big friendship" with Anton only began when he (Vitalii) was about seventeen years old. Before then, Anton had simply not noticed his brother who was seven years younger. (Their relationship will be discussed further in a later section).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 184.

Years of Adolescence: 1901-1904

In December 1900, when Makarenko was twelve years old, his family moved back to Kriukov at the river Dnepr, where his father and other railroad workers had been transferred. Vitalii reported that in 1898-99 two independent railroads, the Kharkov-Nikolaev and the Kursk-Kharkov-Sevastopol, converged into one major railway network (2500 km) under the name Southline, and in connection with this expansion enormous, highly modernized repair workshops had been set up in Kriukov. Makarenko's father became foreman in the painting workshops.<sup>27</sup>

It seems fitting to pause for a moment and consider the milieu that Anton encountered in this new setting. The railroad employees in Kriukov lived in their own settlements that, unlike other buildings in Kriukov, were provided with electricity. Other privileges included free medical treatment and hospitalization, free drugstores, clubs, bathhouses and libraries, as well as free schooling for children of the railroad workers. Railroad employees were also provided low-cost quality meals. In time, Makarenko's father advanced to the position of foreman, and finally to

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 164; Zeittafel, 280.

master-painter and work-shop director.<sup>28</sup> When, during the Russian-Japanese war of 1904-1905, work increased in the railroad workshops--the Kriukov workshops manufactured ambulance carriages--father Semenovitch worked two shifts. For two years he was chronically exhausted, but he earned from 130 to 140 rubles monthly, which enabled him to save enough money to buy their own house in Spring of 1905.<sup>29</sup>

Vitalii's description of Kriukov gives us a rare glimpse into the prerevolutionary life of the small town where Anton spent thirteen years of his life (1900-1911, and 1917-1919) and where he encountered some of his most significant and formative experiences. Kriukov was for all practical purposes a suburb of Kremenchug, an industrial town on the bank of the Dnepr (the largest river in the Ukraine), and traditionally considered a "poor cousin" of Kremenchug. When the Makarenko family moved to Kriukov there were ten-thousand inhabitants. There was no running water, no canalization, no electricity (except for the railroad workshops), no hospital, physicians or other form of medical help. Nor was there a newspaper stand or bookstore. Yet, Vitalii remembered Kriukov as an enormous city with three churches, a cobblestoned main-street, a large marketplace, and, above all, its expansive bank along

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<sup>28</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 125; Erinnerungen, 168, 153.

<sup>29</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 125; Erinnerungen, 173; Zeittafel, 281-282.

the Dnepr. A railroad-bridge connected Kriukov to Kremenchug, which Vitalii called the "great industrial and cultural center."<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, Kremenchug had a more active cultural life than Poltava, a city in the East Ukraine where the Ukrainian government was situated. It could boast two theatres, an opera, and four or five elegantly equipped cinemas. A new auditorium attracted famous artists such as Anna Pavlova and the violinist Jan Kubelik, who gave regular guest performances. Well-known symphonies and string orchestras visited Kremenchug frequently for concerts. One such concert was particularly well remembered by Vitalii. He and Anton, then aged fifteen, had listened with "devotion and rapture" to Alexander Glazunov's music, to Grieg's Peer Gynt, to Mozart's 40th symphony and to Robert Schumann's 4th.<sup>31</sup>

Anton, in August 1901, entered the four-class municipal school in Kremenchug. He excelled as a student and earned top grades in all subjects.<sup>32</sup> According to Vitalii, Anton could not forgive his father for having sent him to the municipal school in Kremenchug and not to the secondary school, which Vitalii was able to visit seven

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<sup>30</sup>Erinnerungen, 164, 168.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 168-69.

<sup>32</sup>Zeittafel, 281; Ämtliche Dokumente [Official documents] in Hillig, ed., MM III, 17.

years later. Vitalii explained that in 1900 Father Semenovitch could not afford the secondary school's annual tuition of sixty rubles. Furthermore, Vitalii explained, "the secondary school would not have been the right thing for Anton . . . as it was leading to the technical high school; Anton, however, was not interested in mathematics."<sup>33</sup>

During this time (from 1901 to 1905) the Makarenko's lived in the Mironov's house, which epitomized, according to Vitalii, a "backward, narrow-minded, alarmingly gloomy and dull world." The Makarenko family had rented the largest of eight apartments in this home. Mironov, a farmer and entrepreneur, had grown rich and greedy. His front yard swarmed with children, including ten of his own, the others rooming in the many apartments contained in the enormous house. In the yard chickens ran freely, as did ducks, geese, turkey-hen, and piglets. In Vitalii's words, "one lived primitively." The unpaved streets consisted of soft, deep sand. There were no water pipes nor any form of sewerage. Water was delivered by the driver of a water-carriage, who charged one kopeck per bucket. Vitalii remembered that "people worked, ate a lot, slept a lot, and

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<sup>33</sup>Erinnerungen, 180; see also Kolloquium mit V. S. Makarenko. [Colloquy with V. S. Makarenko], in Hillig, ed., MM III, 152.

no one ever read a single word."<sup>34</sup> On holidays, people got drunk and occasionally there were knife fights and killings. Yet, Vitalii insisted, in spite of such primitiveness, people lived an honest life, and theft and plunder were unknown. Beggars, vagabonds, pilgrims, suspicious "monks," Italians with marionettes, Tartars with fustians, and Chinese with sand-colored silk, all appeared in large numbers.

Across the yard, as far as the eye could reach, was clean sand, covered with carpets of fragrant, aromatic thyme, called kuchuguri. Makarenko had written about this marvel in his A Book for Parents.

The kuchuguri was a broad expanse of open country which . . . stretched ahead for almost two miles, and on either side even farther. The whole area was dotted with numerous sandy hills, which were quite high and sometimes shaped like real mountain ridges. In places they were overgrown with bushes and elsewhere short stubbly grass grew on them.<sup>35</sup>

On summer evenings young workers and neighbors gathered around the Mironov house to sing or play such games as Gorodki (a kind of skittles, played with lengths of log, instead of balls), ball contests and the like. Anton participated in these games, but, due to severe

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<sup>34</sup>Erinnerungen, 169-170.

<sup>35</sup>Erinnerungen, 170; A. S. Makarenko, The Collective Family: A Handbook for Parents. With an introduction by Urie Bronfenbrenner. Trans. from the Russian by Robert Daglish. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1967), 179-180. This work was originally published as A Book for Parents and will hereafter be cited as A Book for Parents.

shortsightedness, he was most clumsy and awkward. As a result, Vitalii recalled, Anton became the target for sometimes cruel teasing. Once he was tripped, causing a bad fall; his nose and lips bled, his glasses broke. For some reason he was ridiculed with the name "count Antoska the street cleaner." The only person who stood by Anton was Polja, Mironov's oldest daughter, who with great indignation, called the offenders "rowdies" and looked after Anton with motherly concern. A few years later, it was Polja whom Makarenko wanted to marry. Vitalii wrote, "Even for me as a child it was evident that Anton suffered greatly under these rough pranks. He became more and more saddened . . . finally he separated altogether from these games and from this company."<sup>36</sup>

It was in those years, from 1903 to 1904, that Anton began a close friendship with a classmate from the municipal school named Calov (or Salov). Calov, as Anton confided into Vitalii many years later (1916), had been the only true male friend he ever had; yet, this friendship has been overlooked by Makarenko's biographers. Calov was determined to become active as a revolutionary and tried to persuade Anton to join him. Anton declined, as Vitalii remembered, saying:

Firstly, I do not believe in the healing strength of bloody revolutions--they all proceed according to one and the same scheme: first a bloodbath, then anarchy

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<sup>36</sup>Erinnerungen, 170-71.

and chaos--and as a result the most barbaric dictatorship. That is the one thing. Secondly, I am simply not suited to throw bombs into the coaches of ministers, and much less, to hold a red flag . . . and to sing the Marseillaise. I simply can not do so.<sup>37</sup>

Calov apparently regularly supplied Anton with the literature of the Socialist Revolutionaries, which Anton read in secrecy, knowing that his father despised the revolution and that he would have "chased him out of the house" had he discovered what Anton was reading. In 1906 Calov went to Petersburg. He sent two letters to his family and then vanished without leaving a trace. Anton, knowing of Calov's attachment to his family, was convinced that he had perished young. "What a shame," Anton pondered, "of all the people whom I have met in my life, he was the only true HUMAN BEING" [sic].<sup>38</sup>

In June 1904, at the age of sixteen, Makarenko graduated from Kremenchug's four class municipal school with top grades in all subjects. These included religion, Russian, arithmetic, geometry, natural science and physics, history, geography, calligraphy, drawing and painting. His graduation certificate also stated that he participated in singing and gym. Immediately following graduation, Anton enrolled in the same school for a one-year course in pedagogy, and completed this training with equally great success on August 11, 1905. Makarenko was now trained to be

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 171-72.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 172.



an elementary school teacher. At the same time he was qualified to teach congregational singing.<sup>39</sup>

On September 1905, at seventeen, Anton took on a teaching position at the two-class railroad-school (of the ministry of transportation) in Kriukov, teaching Russian and drawing and painting. The director of this school was M. G. Kompantsev who was to become not only Makarenko's superior for the next four years, but also a lasting friend.<sup>40</sup>

Makarenko's adolescent years were marked less by health concerns with the exception of his myopia--than by social interactions with his peers and the adult world and by his first experiences of love and friendship. While he did not earn much prestige on the playground, he excelled academically. He was obviously struggling to find his own relationship to his family and to the social and political changes in Russia.

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<sup>39</sup>Amtliche Dokumente, in Hillig, ed., MM III, 17; Zeittafel, 281; Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 126; see also I. I. Cernysev, who commented that Makarenko was an outstanding pupil and that his essays were read out loud for being exemplary, in Hillig, ed., MM III, 73.

<sup>40</sup>Zeittafel, 282; M. G. Kompancev, "Aus Erinnerungen an A. S. Makarenko" [From memoirs of A. S. Makarenko] in Hillig, ed., MM III, 80-84.

Young Adulthood and Early Career: 1905-1914

Makarenko's initial years of teaching at the Kriukov railroad school coincided with the beginnings of the Russian Revolution. Contrary to E. Z. Balabanovic, one of Makarenko's biographers, who stated that Makarenko was politically active and significantly shaped by early revolutionary events, Vitalii reported that his brother like many intellectuals of his day, had completely turned away from politics, concentrating instead on his teaching.<sup>41</sup> Makarenko's interests were almost exclusively directed toward his personal life, toward writing prose and poetry, reading, and toward thoughts of love and marriage. Vitalii stated that he never saw any political literature, including anything by Marx and Lenin, amongst Anton's many books, except for the journal Novaja zizn [New Life], to which Anton had briefly subscribed in 1905.<sup>42</sup>

Anton's interest in writing was already apparent at the Kremenchug municipal school, where he composed and recited humorous poems. Inspired by a brief love for Natasa

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<sup>41</sup>G. Hillig, "Der schwierige Weg zum Kommunismus," [The difficult path to communism], in Hundert Jahre, 209-210.

<sup>42</sup>Kolloquium mit V. S. Makarenko, in Hillig, ed., MM III, 153; Zeittafel, 282; Novaja zizn was a Bolshevik newspaper.

Najda (1903), he had also begun to keep a diary, and in 1910, he began capturing important events in a notebook.<sup>43</sup>

Vitalii recalled that his brother, in 1903, at the age of fifteen, had begun reading Gorky. Lermontov (a liberal poet, 1814-1841) and Anton Chekhov, whom Anton imitated by using a cane and a pince-nez, followed a year later. Anton was an avid reader. In his memoirs Vitalii recalled Anton coming home every other day with a new book that he either purchased or obtained from the railroad library in Kharkov. In addition, Anton obtained scientific literature from the Kremenchug municipal library and subscribed to an impressive collection of journals and newspapers.<sup>44</sup>

Philosophy was among his interests, particularly Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, as was sociology, art history and astronomy. He studied books on history and had read all of Roman history and the history of the French Revolution. Foreign authors included Ibsen, Strindberg, Maeterlinck, Wilde, London, Hauptmann, d'Annunzio, France, Rostand, Hamsum, as well as the famous pleiad of Russian writers. Vitalii also remembered seeing a bible on Anton's desk. Anton read remarkably fast and could easily win any argument about literature. This became obvious even to the local

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<sup>43</sup>Zeittafel, 281, 284.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 281-82; G. Hillig, "Zum Problem von Makarenko's nationaler Identität" [Regarding the problem of Makarenko's national identity], in Hundert Jahre, 173; Erinnerungen, 185.

priest with whom Makarenko debated religious questions. In Vitalii's words, "I participated a few times and Anton was always the winner."<sup>45</sup>

Among Makarenko's personal concerns was what Vitalii called the "tragedy" of his unappealing appearance. He was short, with small grey eyes--often squeezed together to compensate for shortsightedness--and had a large, often reddened nose. Anton would lament, "My nose was created by God . . . for seven [people], yet I alone must bear it. I am stuck with this nose for my entire life--no easy task."<sup>46</sup> As Vitalii recalled, Anton was always dressed immaculately and, before the revolution, invariably owned several good suits with matching ties, shirt, and shoes. He went to the best tailor in town and was in this respect, in Vitalii's judgment, quite a "fop."<sup>47</sup>

Because, according to Vitalii, Anton was easily "inflamed," "like a fearless hussar," he felt his affliction more acutely. Vitalii claimed that his brother fell in love every six months, "and not platonically" but by "demanding unconditional answers."<sup>48</sup> At the age of seventeen, shortly after he began his position as a teacher,

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<sup>45</sup>Erinnerungen, 184-85; Kolloquium mit V. S. Makarenko, in Hillig, ed., MM III, 153.

<sup>46</sup>Erinnerungen, 185-86.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 197.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 186.

he wanted to marry Polja Mironova, but father Semen Grigorevitch was against such an early marriage. Nonetheless, Anton insisted, and went so far as to threaten suicide. After the local priest D. Grigorovich, who taught religion at the railroad school, persuaded Anton to give up his dream and sent Anton to speak with his wife, Anton's stormy emotions calmed. To be sure, Grigorovich did not foresee that his suggestion to "talk to Matuschka" was immediately successful. In Vitalii's words, "We have to assume that Matuschka indeed found the right words. Within a short time, Anton was her intimate friend." Anton was then eighteen years old, their relationship was to last two decades. In the small town-milieu of Kriukov the news caused a major scandal, especially among the religious. It also precipitated a conflict that never healed between Anton and his father."

In retrospect, Vitalii observed that Anton underwent a profound inner transformation during the period from 1905 to 1907. Anton, who in 1905 "carelessly" wanted to commit himself to marriage, had completely changed his mind two years later. He became misanthropic, reticent, solemn, occasionally melancholic, and mute. Around 1907, his moral creed sounded like this:

There is no God. Only children can believe the stories of the original sin, of the kingdom of God, of the resurrection of the dead and the immortality of soul.

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"Ibid., 186, 188-89; Zeittafel, 283.

Life is senseless, absurd and cruel. One may love individual people, but mankind as a whole is one big mass, a brood that deserves nothing but contempt. Charity is quite inappropriate and has absolutely no use. It is a crime to beget children. This is the fate of poor peasants and of the small man, precisely that portion of the earth's population which cannot provide for the future of their children because of poverty. Thus, as one must not procreate children, marriage becomes completely superfluous. Human beings can live together--freely, without engaging in, as they call it--a legal bond, as long as they love each other. If their love dwindles, like everything else on this earth, mankind can freely separate, without the degrading inconvenience of a divorce.<sup>50</sup>

The Hungarian psychologist Ferenc Pataki commented that this kind of depressing Weltanschauung was a phenomenon not unfamiliar to the Eastern European intelligentsia who were experiencing a sense of uprootedness and were searching for meaning and a path of self-knowledge.<sup>51</sup> Libor Pecha, educator and Makarenko scholar from Czechoslovakia, observed that Makarenko's thoughts on marriage showed both the pessimistic influence of Shopenhauer, and that of revolutionary thinking, which in its radical criticism of traditional institutions did not spare marriage and the family. Pecha also pointed out that Makarenko adhered to his oath not to marry until shortly before his death.<sup>52</sup> Makarenko's dissatisfaction with himself and others was

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<sup>50</sup>Erinnerungen, 187.

<sup>51</sup>Ferenc Pataki, "Makarenko's Sozialismusbild" [Makarenko's picture of socialism], in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 196-97.

<sup>52</sup>L. Pecha, "Frauen im Leben Makarenko's" [Women in Makarenko's life], in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 143.

expressed in a curiously heartless comment to his mother. As a teacher in the railroad school he disposed over a generous salary, of which he gave his mother only a small portion for his upkeep; when she asked for a larger contribution, he responded, "I have not asked you to put me onto God's beautiful earth. For this act you have to bear a certain responsibility. I cannot pay you any more."<sup>53</sup>

To balance this glum picture, Vitalii, in his written memoirs, mentions the more cheerful aspects of Anton's existence, which included his social life in Kriukov and recreational activities during his Kriukov years, certainly these events between 1908 and 1910 that Vitalii and Anton shared. This included bicycle rides--Anton spent 125 rubles on a German "Adler"--boat rides on the Dnepr, weekend visits to a "garden" featuring an open-air theatre with electric lights, a dance floor and a bar serving nonalcoholic drinks. Vitalii remembered that he and Anton never missed a weekend to promenade in this garden and watch the passersby, commenting on their manners and costumes. Anton would make shrewd, often merciless remarks.<sup>54</sup>

Around 1910, a circle of intellectuals, including teachers, two physicians and their wives, and other friends, including the local priest's wife, Elizaveta Fedorovna Grigorovich, gathered around Anton to discuss questions of

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<sup>53</sup>Erinnerungen, 185.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 197-98.

literature--"to the point of exhaustion." No one could win out over Anton. In retrospect, Vitalii could see that Anton, already in those days, must have had some heart trouble. On two occasions, he remembered Anton suddenly fainting. He never consulted a physician.<sup>55</sup>

On September 24, 1911, Makarenko left Kriukov to teach at the two-class railroad school in South Dolinsk in Khersonski province. He wanted to join Kompantsev, who two years earlier, had become director of this school. There was nothing to keep Anton in Kriukov for Elizaveta Fedorovna, of whom he had grown very fond, had left her husband and gone to Kiev to become a teacher.<sup>56</sup>

Vitalii drew a bleak picture of Dolinsk: halfway between Kremenchug and Nikolaev, this desolate village/town, far removed from any cultural center, was located on a barren steppe. It had a train station, a school, a church, two stores, and about one hundred houses. The Dolinsk school drew students from a wide area, mostly those of railroad workers who lived along the line. In addition to teaching, Makarenko oversaw the school's residential units.

Vitalii visited his brother about ten times during the three years Anton lived in Dolinsk. His description of Anton's life in Dolinsk is important to reiterate, because it dramatically departs from the accounts given by

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 198, 197.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 201, 189; Zeittafel, 284.



Makarenko's biographers and contemporaries.<sup>57</sup> The intense boredom and weariness amongst the teachers in Dolinsk was generally drowned in wine. Virtually every day, Anton, Kompantsev, and the other teachers would visit one of the railroad line's employees to eat and drink well into the night. If not invited, the group would visit the local priest, or the bar of the railroad waiting room. What saved Anton from total dullness was that during the summer months he returned to Kriukov where he was surrounded by books and a more stimulating environment, or he visited Elizaveta Fedorovna in Kiev.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 201-202; Leonhard Froese, citing Makarenko biographer E. Balabanovich in Ideengeschichtliche Triebkräfte der Russischen und Sowjetischen Pädagogik [Russian and Soviet pedagogy and its driving forces as seen from a history-of-ideas perspective]. (Heidelberg: Verlag Quelle & Meyer, 1956), 222-23. Hereafter cited as Triebkräfte; Valentin Kumarin, Anton Makarenko: His Life and His Work in Education. Trans. from the Russian by Katherine Judelson. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), 16.

<sup>58</sup>Erinnerungen, 202.

Poltava, the Teachers' Institute: 1914-1917.<sup>59</sup>

In summer of 1914, on the eve of World War I, a new pedagogical institute was opened in Poltava, a city in eastern Ukraine, to train teachers for municipal and higher elementary schools. Makarenko, at the age of twenty-six, applied for admission and passed the institute's comprehensive and highly competitive entrance examination.<sup>60</sup> The institute's director, Alexander Volnin, recorded in his memoirs that Makarenko was admitted to the institute regardless of not having passed the test in religion. He explained that due to Makarenko's nine-years experience as a teacher and because of his brilliant test results in other subjects, especially Russian and mathematics, which testified to his "intellectual orientation," he was admitted to the institute.<sup>61</sup> Why Makarenko decided to go to Poltava

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<sup>59</sup>An important source for this discussion has been the research of Marian Bybluk, University of Torun, Poland. By using materials of the Central National Historical Archive, which recently became accessible, he was able to add to and correct the existing literature.

<sup>60</sup>M. Bybluk, "Makarenkos Alma mater," in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 32-33; Zeittafel, 286; A. K. Volnin, "A. S. Makarenko im Lehrerinstitut. Erinnerungen." [A. S. Makarenko at the teachers' institute. Recollections], in Hillig, ed., MM III, 109.

<sup>61</sup>Volnin, "A. S. Makarenko," in Hillig, ed., MMIII, 113.

remains unanswered. Was it mainly to further his education, or to be closer to Elizaveta Fedorovna who was then teaching in Poltava? In any event, Anton rented a room on Pushkin street, the same street on which Elizaveta lived, and on October 4, 1914, began training.<sup>62</sup>

Marian Bybluk, a Makarenko scholar and lecturer for Russian at the University of Torun, Poland, has pointed out that, although the professional qualifications of the Institute's faculty were comprehensive and their teaching methods good, the overall level of instruction was not very high due to the inadequate educational background of most trainees. Makarenko was the notable exception. This lack of general knowledge among the trainees became quite visible when the institute shifted from the traditional teaching by lectures to a system in which trainees were to prepare their own presentations. This shift was necessitated by the war's requiring conscription of many institute instructors. Bybluk inferred that "this late child of tsarist educational policy" was to experience the rough conditions of war in a particularly distinct fashion, that is lack of staff, rooms, and resources. Under these onerous conditions, the institute, in spite of exhaustive efforts, could not provide a high-level education to its trainees. At the same time, these shortcomings underscored the talents of those who

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<sup>62</sup>Erinnerungen, 190, 205.

stood out, such as Anton Makarenko.<sup>63</sup>

The institute offered a three-year course in pedagogy, which included logic, didactics, and methods of teaching, along with courses in Russian, history of literature, world-and-Russian history, mathematics, physics, natural science, geography, drawing and singing. According to Volnin, Makarenko was an outstanding student and a conscientious and serious learner. He seized the opportunity to deepen his knowledge and was one of the most demanding users of the institute's library, showing a particular talent in verbal presentations. Volnin recalled:

His speeches were not only distinguished by their sound argument and logic . . . but by being exceptionally good in form. A.S. possessed a remarkable fluency of language, expressing himself ingeniously in subtle and well-formed phrases in the purest literary Russian, something I have never encountered among other Ukrainian students. It was quite a unique gift. He would lecture for two or three hours in the most perfect literary Russian, occasionally seasoned with one of his Ukrainian expressions and with his own unique native humor which held the tireless attention of his listeners.<sup>64</sup>

A. N. Vedmickij, a contemporary of Makarenko and co-student at the Poltava Teachers' Institute, reported in his reminiscences that already during the first year of the Institute's existence, a group of students formed an illegal circle for political studies, which included reading

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<sup>63</sup>Bybluk, in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 38, 39, 34, 40.

<sup>64</sup>Volnin, "A. S. Makarenko," in Hillig, ed., MM III, 110, 113-15; see also V. N. Tarasov, "Im Poltavaer Lehrerinstitut" [At the Poltava teachers institute], in Hillig, ed., MM III, 117-125.

Michajlovskij and Plechanov. (Plechanov, 1856-1918, became a Menshevik leader; opposed Bolsheviks' 1917 coup).<sup>65</sup>

Vitalii, who, in the summer of 1914, had just graduated from secondary school, was able to visit Anton in November before enlisting in the Cuguev military school to pursue a career in the tsarist army. Thus, he had firsthand experience of Makarenko's life in Poltava, which he called a "period of intense labor, concurrent with the life of a poor student."<sup>66</sup> He remembered the "beastly cold" in Anton's miserable, unheated room--cold enough for water to freeze in its pitcher. Anton's situation was far from lucrative, he received a stipend of 180 rubles annually, "not enough to live or to die by."<sup>67</sup> Vitalii itemized the standard items in a student's budget: rent (five rubles), meals, laundry, educational materials, paper, hair cuts, tobacco, etc., for which the remaining ten rubles were not sufficient. To economize, Anton ate lunch in a vegetarian restaurant that served meals for 25 kopecks but left him perpetually hungry. According to Vitalii Makarenko's father sent him ten rubles per month in spite of their strained relationship, but he sent the money under the mother's name for he did not want

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<sup>65</sup>A. N. Vedmickij, "Im Poltavaer Lehrerinstitut." [At the Poltava teachers institute], in Hillig, ed., MM III, 126. Vedmickij did not indicate whether Makarenko joined this circle.

<sup>66</sup>Erinnerungen, 205, 209; Zeittafel, 285, 287.

<sup>67</sup>Erinnerungen, 205.

Anton to know that he still cared about him.<sup>68</sup>

The year 1916 was marked by two major events in Makarenko's life. In February his father died, leaving a savings of almost one-thousand rubles. Vitalii believed that his worsening rheumatism and conflicts with Anton had taken a toll on his health.<sup>69</sup> In December Anton had to interrupt his studies to serve in the military. He went to Kiev for basic infantry training and was still there when the revolution broke out. In Vitalii's words, Anton was "surprised by the February Revolution." Vitalii retold a story, which, as Dunstan expressed, "cast considerable doubt on the image of Anton as the inveterate military man," an image of him later held by his contemporaries.<sup>70</sup> Early in 1917, Elizaveta Fedorovna Grigorovich unexpectedly visited Vitalii in Kremenchug, where he was recuperating in a military clinic from injuries at the front. She implored him to follow her to Kiev to "rescue" Anton. The story goes that Anton had written to Elizaveta that he wanted to commit suicide as barracks life was intolerable and altogether depressing. Together they rushed to Kiev where Anton fell weeping upon their necks. Vitalii could not understand his brother's desperation, for Anton had not once held a gun in

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 205, 207.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 190; Zeittafel, 287.

<sup>70</sup>Erinnerungen, 209; Dunstan, "Demythologizing Makarenko", 29.

his hand nor fired a single shot. The company commander assured Makarenko's early release and prematurely demobilized, he returned to Poltava to complete his training.<sup>71</sup> On June 15, 1917, he graduated as best student and the tsarist teacher training institute awarded him their gold medal for his final essay, "The Crisis of Modern Pedagogy."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Erinnerungen, 209-210.

<sup>72</sup>Zeittafel, 289; L. Froese, G. Hillig, S. Weitz and I. Wiehl, eds. Anton Makarenko, Gesammelte Werke, [Anton Makarenko, Collected Works] Marburger Ausgabe, vol. 1, paperback "study edition." (Ravensburg: Otto Maier Verlag, 1976), 105. Hereafter cited as Marburg Study Edition.

Pedagogical Experiments: 1917-1919

In July-August of 1917, following his graduation in poltava, Makarenko was appointed director of the railroad school in Kriukov, the same school in which he had begun his teaching career twelve years earlier. Now he was charged with reorganizing this two-class school into an extended elementary school.<sup>73</sup> The same year saw the outbreak of the October Revolution, in which Lenin's Bolsheviks overthrew the provisional government and established Soviet power. Vitalii, under the new Soviet regime was demobilized from the tsarist army, ("In October, the Bolshevik troops literally put me on the street.") returned to Kriukov and joined Anton in the railroad school, teaching sports, drawing, and mathematics for the next two years.<sup>74</sup>

Vitalii recalled how the school days dragged monotonously, for their primary concerns were not those of pedagogical achievements but of "daily survival" during this time of "extreme material privation." Civil War was raging in the Ukraine, bringing the already backward economy to a standstill. Food was scarce and the peasants did not want

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<sup>73</sup>Zeittafel, 289; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 20.

<sup>74</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 129; Erinnerungen, 213.



to sell bread and meat for money that was worthless to them. It was equally difficult to obtain clothes and school supplies. The children were poorly dressed and Vitalii's military uniform, which was all he had to wear, was, to them, an object of great interest.<sup>75</sup>

Vitalii spoke of three activities, that he and Anton developed during their work at the school and which, according to Hillig, could be seen as distinct elements of the educational practices Makarenko later developed in the Gorky Colony. These were the founding of an amateur theater circle, named after the author V.G. Korolenko; introduction of military exercises; and forming pupils into an agricultural labor brigade.<sup>76</sup>

The Korolenko theater circle for lay people was established after Vitalii, himself an avid theater lover and former member of a theatrical club, had proposed this idea to Anton and the teachers of the railroad school. The first piece to be performed was Kasatka, a comedy by A. N. Tolstoy (1882-1945). The difficulties in producing the play were "beyond imagination." The actors, entirely inexperienced, had to be trained to articulate their lines and project to an audience. Rehearsals were conducted in the evenings, propelled by home distilled liqueur that Anton had found a way of providing. Vitalii became artistic director, while

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<sup>75</sup>Erinnerungen, 213.

<sup>76</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 129.

Anton was the administrative overseer and prompter. Requisites such as props, costumes, scenery, and backdrops had to be produced by the groups. The only playhouse in Kriukov, owned by the railroad workshops, was without lighting and electricity had to be installed. The first performance, on January 1918, was announced on red posters in the streets of Kriukov. The theater was bursting with spectators, the national hymn was played, and the performance was so successful the players felt encouraged to continue. Twelve plays were performed between 1917 and 1919, including works by Gogol, Chekhov, A. V. Tolstoy, and Strindberg. The proceeds from the performances were used to buy brass instruments for the school. Similarly, the theater became an important part in the educational, social, and cultural life of the Gorky Colony several years later.<sup>77</sup>

The introduction of military exercises occurred, in Vitalii's words, somehow "unnoticed." Dunstan points out that Vitalii's account of this practice leads one to consider the origins of Makarenko's use of military activities in the Gorky Colony. Based on the students' expressed interest in the war, "we," in Vitalii's words, "began to occupy ourselves with military order, without any definite plan. During our gym lessons we lined up in the courtyard . . . regrouped ourselves and marched, singing,

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<sup>77</sup>Erinnerungen, 215-17.

around the neighborhood."<sup>78</sup> The students began asking for a flag, but it was Makarenko who, at first, was firmly against this, stating, "I do not wish to institute a barrack life here."<sup>79</sup> Vitalii emphasized that Anton was in principle against anything military, possibly because of his own experiences in the barracks in Kiev. Nonetheless, the pupil's enthusiastic responses to military trappings impressed Makarenko. Ultimately the school not only had its own flag but also a brass band. On a spring day in 1918, the students, accompanied by their parents, undertook their first military march with flag and orchestra into the nearby woods. Military marches soon became a regular event during and after school. Makarenko had lost his doubts over the "usefulness of military order" and adapted the practice later in the Gorky Colony.<sup>80</sup>

The organization of the agricultural labor brigade in spring of 1919 was, in Vitalii's words, a "total failure" and he never knew his brother's aims for this project. Anton had leased a large garden from F. Archangel'skij, Elizaveta Fedorovna's father, for his pupils to plant fruits and vegetables. Modelled on the boy scouts, he assembled his students into work detachments: vegetable gardeners, fruit-tree gardeners, beekeepers, watchmen, etc.

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 214; Dunstan, "Demythologizing Makarenko," 29.

<sup>79</sup>Erinnerungen, 214.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 214-15; Marburg Study Edition, 105.

Even the scout slogan, "Be Ready!" was adapted. B. F. Goronovic, an acquaintance of Makarenko, recorded that the children were grouped according to categories of fruits and vegetables. They wore badges with pictures, e.g., of an apple, a potato, a cherry, to show the field of special work in which they were engaged. Vitalii did not speak very positively of this experiment, as he believed the work was too hard for the children, that those who lived along the railroad lines outside Kriukov could not participate, and that the teachers were not interested in devoting their summer vacation to harvesting potatoes. Still, one may, as Hillig suggests, see in the work brigade idea the beginnings of Makarenko's collective organization that he later developed in the Gorky Colony.<sup>81</sup>

In August 1919, Makarenko left Kriukov and went to Poltava, where, on September 9, he assumed directorship of the 2nd municipal elementary school. In Vitalii's words, "Anton dropped everything in Kriukov." Vitalii suspected that this abrupt departure was sparked by the political situation, for the White Army under Denikin, (a tsarist military leader who commanded the anti-Bolshevik or White forces), had occupied Kriukov on August 10, 1919. Anton may

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<sup>81</sup>Erinnerungen, 218; see also B. F. Goronovich, "Erinnerungen an A. S. Makarenko: Die Arbeitsbrigade. Der V. G. Korolenko-Theaterzirkel" [Memoirs of A. S. Makarenko: the labor brigade. The V. G. Korolenko theater-circle], in Hillig, ed. MM III, 133-34; Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 129.

have feared the "Red terror" of the Bolsheviki, who, in response to the mobilization of the White Army, were threatening people's lives.<sup>82</sup> Anton held this post until september 1920, when he was put in charge of a labor colony for juvenile lawbreakers in Triby near Poltava, later to become known as the Gorky Colony.<sup>83</sup>

For Vitalii, 1919 was to be his last year in Russia. When Kriukov was occupied by Denikin, he joined the White Army as an officer. In November 1920, he was evacuated from the Crimea to Constantinople, along with the remainder of the White Army. He saw Anton for the last time in mid-November 1919 in Poltava, in the house of Elizaveta Fedorovna. His last words were, "All the best, Anton. You know that there is no other way for me." Anton replied, "All the best. And don't forget that my relations to you have not changed."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Zeittafel, 293, 294; Erinnerungen, 218-19.

<sup>83</sup>Zeittafel, 295; according to the testimony of Elizaveta Fedorovna Grigorovich (citing archival sources), who was teaching at an elementary school in Poltava (between 1912[?]-1920), the directorship of the colony for juvenile lawbreakers had at first been offered to her; she declined and suggested Makarenko instead. However, she became a teacher at the colony as early as October 20, 1920. In A. S. Makarenko, Gesammelte Werke (GW) Marburger Ausgabe, vol. 3, eds. L. Froese, G. Hillig, S. Weitz and I. Wiehl, (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982) 263. Hereafter cited as GW Marburg Edition.

<sup>84</sup>Erinnerungen, 218-21; Zeittafel, 294-95.

Educating the Besprizorniki: 1920-1937

In September 1920, Makarenko committed himself to a task that was to become the great challenge and central concern of the rest of his life. The Gubernia Department of Public Education in Poltava entrusted him with educating the homeless waifs, the bands of orphaned and abandoned youngsters of the revolution and the Civil War who had increased in such numbers that "you can hardly move for them in the streets, and they even break into houses."<sup>85</sup> Thus, Anton Semyonovitch, at the age of thirty-two and with fifteen years' experience as a teacher in two elementary railroad schools, agreed to take on the directorship of a colony for lawbreaking children and youth that later became known as the Gorky Colony. His work with delinquents engaged Makarenko almost to the end of his life.

His charges--ragged and running wild--were children and youths who had gained their often extraordinary experiences on the streets, trains, steamers, and barges. Though mostly illiterate, they were experts with pistols and knives. In their struggle for existence they had never

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<sup>85</sup>A. S. Makarenko, The Road to Life. An Epic of Education, vol. 1. Trans. from the Russian by Ivy and Tatiana Litvinov. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1951), 1-6. Hereafter cited as The Road to Life.

experienced a sense of belonging nor developed social awareness and consideration for others.

The conditions under which Makarenko began his work could not have been more unfavorable, particularly that first, terrible winter of 1920-1921, when the entire Soviet economy was almost paralyzed and countless people perished of cold, hunger, and diseases of malnutrition.<sup>86</sup> Poverty was unquestionably one of the first and most profound experiences that Makarenko shared with his pupils and teachers in the new colony. Makarenko also struggled with a sense of helplessness when he was confronted with his first arrivals, in Patrick Alston's words, with "six male 'moral defectives,' that is, veteran highwaymen in custody for armed robbery and housebreaking, who . . . had been saved from firing squads because of their youth."<sup>87</sup> Oskar Anweiler points out that Makarenko, unlike other practitioners, who were educating delinquent youth by a "reckless severity" or "fluffy liberality," was striving to create new forms of community on the basis of productive daily work, thus pointing to a genuine "road to life" for his juvenile

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<sup>86</sup>Georg S. Counts, Khrushchev and the Central Committee Speak on Education, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1959), 10.

<sup>87</sup>P. L. Alston, "Watch on the Elbe," Slavic and European Education Review, 2 (1978), 49.

offenders."<sup>88</sup> Makarenko focused his pedagogical interest on creating a social and educational environment, a structure and atmosphere that would enable many socially damaged youth to become wholesome, decent people capable of finding a responsible place in society. During the years in the Gorky Colony, Makarenko developed his pedagogical aims and ideals, his view of the child, and his new and peculiar educational system. He forged his pedagogical theories out of his own educational experiences, the content of Gorky's thought, the pedagogical traditions of tsarist Russia, and the revolutionary experience.<sup>89</sup>

He wrote about his experiences at the Gorky Colony and the process by which he developed his educational theories and methods in his semi-autobiographical work, Pedagogicheskaja poema (Pedagogical Poem).<sup>90</sup> This story will be taken up in the next chapter. When Makarenko was asked by a friend, Antonina Pavlovna Sugak, "What has the colony done to you?" he replied (March 1923):

I am quite a different person now, possessing a sense of direction, an iron will, persistence, boldness and finally confidence in myself. The three years out here

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<sup>88</sup>Oskar Anweiler, Geschichte der Schule und Pädagogik in Russland vom Ende des Zarenreiches bis zum Beginn der Stalin - Ära, 2nd. rev. ed. [History of school and pedagogy in Russia from the end of tsardom to the beginning of the Stalin era] (Berlin: Otto Harrassowitz, 1978), 232-233.

<sup>89</sup>Froese, Triebkräfte, 233.

<sup>90</sup>A. S. Makarenko, Pedagogicheskaja poema [Pedagogical poem]. This book has been translated into English under the title The Road to Life. For full citation see footnote 85.



in the colony provide the foundation for my future work. . . . Here we are engaged in an experiment which will be of tremendous importance and not only for this particular colony of juvenile offenders. Our organization has already attracted the attention of the authorities. . . . Our education programme is being discussed in the press."<sup>91</sup>

Although Makarenko, in 1923, could still report that "our colony has already been recognized as the most important in the Ukraine," controversies over his educational ideas and practices would develop with the educational authorities. In summer 1928, the People's Commissariat for Education dismissed Makarenko from the directorship of the Gorky Colony for using un-Soviet methods. These controversies will be the subject of chapter five.

The day Makarenko departed from the Gorky Colony, (mid-July 1928) he went to the new F. E. Dzerzhinsky Commune, a youth labor-commune for homeless children and adolescents established by the GPU (secret police) in 1927 on the outskirts of Kharkov, to assume full-time directorship."<sup>92</sup> To fully appreciate Makarenko's new circumstances, one must return to the year 1927. The Dzerzhinsky Commune, a modern educational establishment had been conceived as a monument to Felix Dzerzhinsky (1877-

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<sup>91</sup>Anton S. Makarenko, "An Excerpt From a Letter to A. P. Sugak," in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 79-80.

<sup>92</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 410-12.

1926), first chief of the Cheka (secret police).<sup>93</sup> In his pedagogical Poem Makarenko reported how the "Cheka-men" of the Ukrainian SSR (Soviet Socialist Republic) had invested their own money and all their free hours to build the Dzerzhinsky Commune, giving it "all the forces of their hearts and minds." Nonetheless, they "were not well versed" in pedagogical theory.<sup>94</sup> In summer of 1927, so Makarenko reported, they had turned to him for pedagogical guidance and "confidingly accepted" his pedagogical point of view "as the fruit of my pedagogical experience." They had, in a quite natural way, entrusted the management of the Commune to Makarenko. Had he not been forced, the thought of leaving his Gorkyites, with whom he felt connected by strong ties of friendship, would have never occurred to him.<sup>95</sup>

In his own writings, Makarenko portrayed the Dzerzhinsky Commune and his role as director in successful, positive terms. But Marburg researchers Götz Hillig and Siegfried Weitz, who examined Soviet archives, including the five-year report of the Dzerzhinsky Commune, discovered that Makarenko's representation of events differed considerably from their findings. The serious conflicts

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<sup>93</sup>The secret police functioned under different names: Cheka: 1917-1922; GPU: 1922; OGPU: 1922-1934; and NKVD: 1934-1943. Cheka stood for Extraordinary Commission for the Struggle against Counter-Revolution, Sabotage, and Speculation.

<sup>94</sup>A. S. Makarenko, The Road to Life, vol. 3, 355.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 351, 378, 377, 382; Marburg Study Edition, 112.

that developed between Makarenko and the Commune's board of governors will be the subject of chapter five.

In June/July 1935, Makarenko, to his surprise, was transferred to Kiev to be deputy head of the new Department of Labor Colonies in the Ukrainian NKVD (Peoples Commissariat for Internal Affairs). He held this position until 1936, when he assumed directorship of Labor Colony No. 5 in Brovary near Kiev.<sup>96</sup> The year in Kiev can be seen as the period in Makarenko's life in which his work with the besprizorniki came to an end. In February 1937, following the arrest of Balickij (Commissioner of the Ukrainian People's Commissariat for the Interior) and Achmatov (Makarenko's direct supervisor in the Department for Labor Colonies), Makarenko left for Moscow, where he hoped to commit his full attention to writing. During the Kiev period, while engaged in his new posts, Makarenko was also vigorously occupied writing. (This will be considered in the next chapter.) He published articles on pedagogical topics, including his famous "Methods for Organization of the Education Process" (Winter 1935) and "The Individual and Society" (December 1936). His accomplishments as a writer made him a well-known figure in educational and literary circles and resulted in numerous speaking

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<sup>96</sup>The NKVD had taken over from the OGPU in 1934; Marburg Study Edition, 122, 125. Makarenko directed the Labor Colony No. 5 in Brovary from October 10, 1936 to the end of January 1937. This colony had been badly run down; within a few weeks he transformed it into a disciplined collective.

engagements before wide audiences. Among these was a lecture in Moscow to workers in a ball-bearing factory on labor education in children's colonies (October 1936).<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 126, 123, 126.

Makarenko's Last Years: 1937-1939

Of his last years, which Makarenko spent in Moscow, Y. Medinsky, (member of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR]), wrote:

From 1937 to 1939 Makarenko wrote a number of stories and articles. His fertile literary activities are notable not only for variety of subject matter, their full and timely response to the events and aspects of life in the Socialist Homeland; it is not merely his unusual literary energy which is so amazing, but also the wide range of fields of literature he covered: he appears before his readers simultaneously as a novelist, a writer for and about children, a literary critic, a journalist, and--last but not least--a specialist in the theory of education.<sup>98</sup>

These lines suggest that Makarenko was unusually successful and productive as a writer during the last years of his life. In reality, the picture was quite different. The Marburg researchers, drawing on archival materials that had been surveyed in the 1980s, including Makarenko's diary and contracts with publishers and newspaper editors, found that Makarenko's Moscow years were intensely stressful, leaving him discouraged and lonely. Hillig speaks of the

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<sup>98</sup>Y. Medinsky, Introduction, in A. S. Makarenko, The Road to Life, vol. 1, XIX-XX.

"shipwreck of a writer."<sup>99</sup>

To provide a better understanding of the often desperate literary productivity that Makarenko exhibited, one must consider his family circumstances, which have so far received little attention from Soviet commentators. Makarenko had to support a family of four, which may come as a surprise since he firmly adhered to his vow not to marry and not to put children into the world. But in September 1935, in a civil ceremony, Makarenko married Galina Stachievna Sal'ko, a senior official from the Ukrainian Commissariat for Education, whom he had met at the Commissariat and with whom he had lived since autumn of 1929.<sup>100</sup> Galina's son from her first marriage, Lev Michajlovic Salko (born 1914), joined the household, as did Olimpiada Vital'evna (born 1920) daughter of Makarenko's brother Vitalii, who immigrated to France in 1920.<sup>101</sup> As the only breadwinner, Makarenko was confronted with unfamiliar financial responsibilities. No longer employed in Moscow, he had recourse to writing to generate an income. Pecha observed,

One marvels at the many literary obligations that Makarenko took on in those years [1937-39] and at the

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<sup>99</sup>G. Hillig, "Das letzte Jahr" [The last year], in Hundert Jahre, 243.

<sup>100</sup>Pecha, "Frauen im Leben Makarenko's," in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 152-53.

<sup>101</sup>Hillig, "Makarenkos Entdeckung der Familie," [Makarenko's discovery of the family], in Hundert Jahre, 122.

amount of inferior work that he wrote which was unequal to his qualifications, such as newspaper articles and reports. At a first glance this appears like a waste of talent and time. However there is a very simple explanation: Makarenko's household was perfectly capable of swallowing up quite substantial sums--such as the honorarium for the Pedagogical Poem--therefore there was a permanent shortage of money.<sup>102</sup>

In May 1937, shortly after his move to Kiev, Makarenko wrote to his friend, K. S. Kononenko:

Our financial situation is currently quite bad; the first honorarium was eaten up by our apartment and new ones are not yet secured. I am writing on several items simultaneously, and I don't know how it all will turn out.<sup>103</sup>

To this letter, Makarenko's wife added, "Anton agreed to some rather tough contracts and now he has to work very hard."<sup>104</sup> By writing shorter articles that promptly produced some fast income, or by entering into new contractual agreements, e.g., for novels and film scripts with publishers and editors who agreed to advance honorariums, economic crises could be temporarily averted. Makarenko made use of both options, in spite of obvious drawbacks. In November 1937, he commented in a letter to N. Sersnev, a former colonist, that his articles had often been ruined by bureaucrats afraid of the living word, who would add their own sentences, throwing out the best passages. He explained that he was dependent on the income as he no

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<sup>102</sup>Pecha, "Frauen im Leben Makarenkos," in Hillig, ed. Hundert Jahre, 154.

<sup>103</sup>Hillig, "Das letzte Jahr," in Hundert Jahre, 251.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 251.

longer retained any salary.<sup>105</sup>

Hillig, in his article "The Last Year," based on meticulously researched archival sources and on Makarenko's diary, gives a detailed and comprehensive description of the many exhausting and time consuming activities Makarenko engaged in during 1938 and 1939. Activities included work as a writer, negotiations with editors of journals, newspapers, and publishing houses, as well as confrontations with critics of his works, consultant to the Moscow chapter of the Union of Soviet Writers to which he had been admitted on June 4, 1934 (see also chapters three and four); public engagements such as lectures and contacts with readers and audiences; correspondence with former colonists and co-workers.<sup>106</sup>

Hillig stressed Makarenko's dire economic circumstances, which forced him to make promises to film studios, publishers, and editors that he was unable to keep. Often, deadlines passed and contracts remained uncompleted. Though Makarenko completed some of his major as well as minor writings, five works were left unfinished. In addition, Makarenko had to answer to the scathing and often

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<sup>105</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 128; Pecha, "Frauen im Leben Makarenkos," in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 154.

<sup>106</sup>Hillig, "Das letzte Jahr," in Hundert Jahre, 245.



devastating attacks of critics of his published works.<sup>107</sup>

All this pressure took its toll on Makarenko's health. In a letter to S. A. Kalabalin (a former colonist), Makarenko reported how on August 10, 1938, and in broad daylight, he had collapsed on a main street, without any premonition, leaving him altogether unconscious.

Arrangements were made for Makarenko to go to Peredelkino, a sanatorium near Moscow, to convalesce. His physician ordered him to stop working, including writing. Two days later (August 12) Makarenko noted in his diary, "I want to write but for some reason I am unable to work."<sup>108</sup> At another time, on December 13, 1938, after having labored over a plan for meeting his commitments, Makarenko wrote in his diary:

Yet such a plan cannot be met either. Every day one fritters away in trifles: Visitors, novices, a whole sea of manuscripts, guests, errands, conferences and correspondence. What to do? One needs a particular kind of sharp edge and obstinacy to protect oneself. But may be I am just lazy.<sup>109</sup>

The last comment seems unlikely considering the comments of Kornei Chukovsky, the well-known Soviet children's writer and critic, who witnessed some of Makarenko's intense, if not urgent, literary outpouring during the last years of his life. He remembered a visit to

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<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 251-52, 265-275; Pecha, "Frauen im Leben Makarenkos," in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 154.

<sup>108</sup>Hillig, "Das letzte Jahr," in Hundert Jahre, 260.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 264.

Makarenko at his home in Moscow:

As I came into the hall . . . I heard the familiar clatter of his typewriter. With his usual single-mindedness Makarenko was hurrying to complete his daily stint. . . . The whole flat--or so it seemed to me then--was throbbing with Makarenko's literary plans. He told me that . . . he would be writing a play, a film-script, a novel. He talked to me of future lectures, films, newspaper articles. . . . The door had hardly closed behind me when the relentless clatter of the typewriter started up again.<sup>110</sup>

The year 1939 did not bring hope nor help to Makarenko. Two letters written to friends in January of that year bear witness to his depressing financial situation and social isolation. To his friend V. P. Zacharzevskij he mentioned "we live modestly--have little money, visit no one, and hardly ever go to the theatre."<sup>111</sup> To K. S. Kononenko he wrote:

Around here, what do we have . . . everything flows away, particularly the years and money. Our saving account holds neither the one nor the other. I earn little, firstly because I don't feel like writing, secondly because I am afraid of the critics . . . and thirdly because I have no time--the devil only knows where it goes! You get up in the morning, deeply convinced to have the whole day at your disposal, but then it turns out that you have spent half of the time on the telephone and the other half somewhere else, smoking, and as usual exchanging some ordinary words. Telephone conversations are almost exclusively with schizophrenics, normal people have stopped to turn to you. This is of course annoying--those whom I need don't call, only those whom I don't need. . . . The critics devour me, but I am not even angry. One person beaten is worth two who are not beaten. I am reacting as rudely as I can, but this does not come

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<sup>110</sup>Kornei Chukovsky, "Encounters with Makarenko," in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 206.

<sup>111</sup>Hillig, "Das letzte Jahr," in Hundert Jahre, 277-78.

easy, and often enough nothing good comes from it and things get even worse.<sup>112</sup>

At the end of his article Hillig commented that Makarenko tried to return to the "world of children," possibly as a "way out of his inferno." In February 1939, he applied for the directorship at a school in Moscow. His request was accepted and Makarenko was to start his new employment at the beginning of the coming school year. Hillig suggested that Makarenko, in addition to gaining financial security by returning to regular employment, may have seen an opportunity to create a new basis for future literary activities by re-opening a field of experience already familiar to him.<sup>113</sup>

Three months before his death, Makarenko applied for membership in the Communist Party. His request was included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Party to be held April 4, 1939. On April 1, while he was returning to Moscow on a suburban train, Makarenko had a sudden heart attack. He died at the age of fifty-one.<sup>114</sup> The Makarenko researchers Götz Hillig of Marburg and Mykola Oksa, professor at the Pedagogical Institute Melitopol, USSR, examined the precise circumstances of Makarenko's death and published the results of their inquiry:

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<sup>112</sup>Ibid., 278.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 283.

<sup>114</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 133, 134.

Makarenko, who together with his wife had spent about two weeks in the convalescent home "The Writer" in Golitsyno near Moscow, wanted to take a day trip to Moscow on the morning of April 1 [1939] to attend to some official and private matters. He collapsed on the train immediately after having taken a seat. The officer on duty found Makarenko unconscious on the bench and mistook him at first for a drunkard. A doctor, who was called from the nearby quarters could, upon her arrival at 10.43, only verify the death of the "passenger Makarenko." The train was made to wait, and the director of the writer's home, S. I. Fonskaja, was contacted by telephone. She immediately arrived and was taken to the wagon; there she assisted with the registration of Makarenko's papers and objects that he had carried, for purposes of protocol. Following this, the train with Makarenko's remains left, delayed, for Moscow. His wife was taken to Moscow in the afternoon by a car from the literary society.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>G. Hillig, M. Oksa, "Die sieben Tode des Anton Makarenko" [The seven deaths of Anton Makarenko], in Hundert Jahre, 294.

## CHAPTER III

### MAKARENKO'S MAJOR WRITINGS

Makarenko's love for language and the written word was, as previously mentioned, already evident to his family when he was a child. His teachers at the Pedagogical Institute in Poltava also noticed Makarenko's literary talent and commented on his linguistic skills. In his essay "Maxim Gorky's Part in My Life" Makarenko reiterated his dream of becoming a writer. He described that he had written while at the Poltava Teachers Institute a short story titled "A Foolish Day" and sent to Gorky for comment. The story depicted a true episode concerning a priest envious of his wife's affection for the local schoolteacher. According to Makarenko, Gorky's reply was not very encouraging. He found the subject interesting but the style weak. At that point, so Makarenko revealed in his essay, he gave up his dream of becoming a writer and decided to turn to pedagogical work.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the discouraging start, Makarenko became a prolific writer, leaving behind a substantial literary

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<sup>1</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 185; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 86-87.

legacy that, according to the Makarenko literature, (including the Marburg research), he created in the 1930s. The perception that the majority of his writings stemmed from the 1930s was based on Makarenko's own accounts and the fact that few writings of the 1920s were known or discussed. This view was compounded by the observations of Maro, the first "chronicler" of the Gorky Colony in 1927, who contended that Makarenko's enormous workload at the Gorky Colony (and later at the Dzerzhinsky Commune) precluded having time for literary pursuits. As a result, Makarenko's life after 1920 was commonly divided into two distinct periods, giving it a "phaselike" character. The 1920s were seen as a period of intense pedagogical activity, and the 1930s as a time of literary production.<sup>2</sup>

Siegfried Weitz, doubtful of this view, pursued the matter further in the 1980s and found that Makarenko had authored some very significant articles in the 1920s, which, in his opinion, have notable literary merit even though they were written for functional and practical ends. Based on his findings, Weitz suggests that the prevailing

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<sup>2</sup>Siegfried Weitz, "Die schöpferischen Jahre." Anmerkungen zu Makarenko's publizistisch-literarischer Tätigkeit in der Gor'kij-Kolonie [The creative years: comments on Makarenko's journalistic-literary activity in the Gorky Colony], in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 60. See also Maro (M. I. Levitina) "Die M. Gork'kij-Kolonie (1924)" in G. Hillig and Siegfried Weitz, eds., Makarenko (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979), 3-15. This work was published as vol. CDVII in the Wege der Forschung series of the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. Hereafter cited as Wege der Forschung.

picture needs to be corrected and Makarenko's central interests, pedagogy and writing, seen as a whole. Weitz holds that the unity of Makarenko's practical educational work and literary activity, though not always visible, nonetheless weaves through Makarenko's biography with "unusual linearity and determination."<sup>3</sup>

In answer to why the early literary writings of Makarenko have been so little known, L. Pecha explained that in the 1920s Makarenko found himself in a difficult situation that prevented publication. Trusting his own pedagogical experiences more than the pedagogical opinions prevailing in the 1920s, Makarenko found himself in continuous conflict: the more his own pedagogical theories took shape and the more aggressively he defended them, the more difficult it became for him to publish his ideas during this most creative period in his life.<sup>4</sup>

Makarenko's first literary contribution, published in the local newspaper in Poltava in February 1923, was titled "The Maxim Gorky Colony" and was intended to introduce his colony to the general public.<sup>5</sup> A following article, "Experiences with the Pedagogical Work in the

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<sup>3</sup>Weitz, "Die schöpferischen Jahre," 60-61.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 61-62; Marburg Study Edition, 108. In an official report of September 20, 1921, Makarenko had for the first time referred to his colony as the Maxim Gorky Colony, the name he retained, in Marburg Study Edition, 107.

poltava M. Gorky Colony," (published in the professional journal Novymi stezhkami in Spring 1923) included what Weitz called a "lively and clear impression" of the newly introduced lessons at the colony according to the "complex" method, a system of projects. This article included Makarenko's first literary discussion of his pedagogical methodology. Another article, that according to Weitz has so far not received adequate attention, is "Survey of the Work at the Poltava M. Gorky Colony" (written in 1925), in which Makarenko gave a well-grounded and detailed explanation of his educational system.<sup>6</sup>

Weitz observed that in his article "On Education" (written in summer 1924) Makarenko's controversial formulations already expressed his position vis-à-vis the approved pedagogical practices. In Weitz's words:

The time after 1925 is marked by an increasing conflict between Makarenko and the official social education, the so-called Socvos, which at first did not have externally visible consequences for him. His appearances at special conferences . . . show with increasing clarity his disagreement on some basic issues. This finally leads to the direct confrontation with the established pedagogical science of the institutes and the authorities, with the well-known result of Makarenko being forced to leave the Gorky-Colony in 1928.<sup>7</sup>

Makarenko's writings fall into the following categories (1) books and novels (2) smaller publications (3) documents from the Gorky Colony and Dzerzhinsky Commune

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<sup>6</sup>Weitz, "Die schöpferischen Jahre, 62-63.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 63.



and (4) diary entries and letters. In this discussion, Makarenko's books and novels will be examined briefly, followed by a summary of his shorter published works, including articles on education, essays, literary criticism, short stories, plays, film scripts, and journalistic writings. The primary source for this discussion will be Anton Makarenko Gesammelte Werke (Anton Makarenko Collected Works), Marburg Edition, volume 13, subtitled Die Makarenko-Drucke 1923-1939, (The Makarenko-publications 1923-1939) Ravensburg 1976. This volume contains a complete chronological index of Makarenko's works published during his lifetime. The bibliography lists 131 publications from the years 1923 to 1940. Other sources will be volumes 1, 7 and 9 of the Gesammelte Werke, Marburg Edition, which contain Makarenko's shorter published works.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>For a comprehensive discussion on Anton Makarenko Gesammelte Werke, Marburg Edition, see the Introduction of this dissertation.

### Books and Novels

The March of the Year Thirty, written in 1930, was Makarenko's first published book. At the time, he was director of the Dzerzhinsky Commune, which in 1930 reached the high-point of its development. In twenty-eight scenes Makarenko tells about the life and growth of the Dzerzhinsky Commune during its first three years. According to the editors of the Marburg Edition, Makarenko, in this work, made an early attempt to express his pedagogical experiences in literary form. They hold that this book is of particular pedagogical interest as it confirms through practical application the concepts of collective education that Makarenko had developed in the Gorky Colony. The book was published, with Gorky's support, in November, 1932.<sup>9</sup>

FD-1 has been called a novel (Sara Lehrman), a sketch (Hillig and Weitz), a "warmhearted portrayal" of life in the Dzerzhinsky Commune (L. Froese).<sup>10</sup> Makarenko initially intended this text to become part three of his

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<sup>9</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 2, p.X; vol. 13, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup>Sara M. Lehrman, "The Pedagogical Ideas," 192; Marburg Study Edition, 118; Leonhard Froese, "Das Pädagogisch-Literarische Werk A. S. Makarenkos" [The pedagogical-literary work of A. S. Makarenko], International Review of Education 2 (March 1956), 116.

Pedagogical Poem. "FD" represents the initials of Felix Dzerzhinsky, FD-1 was the trade mark that identified the electric drill produced in the Commune. According to the editors of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the RSFSR, who edited Makarenko's works in Moscow (1957), Makarenko wanted to show in FD-I "that the educational process does not only proceed from consciousness to conduct, but from conduct to consciousness."<sup>11</sup> Makarenko wrote this book in March and April 1932, but it was not published during his lifetime.<sup>12</sup>

Makarenko's most significant and best-known work is his trilogy, originally titled Pedagogicheskaja poema (strictly translated, it means "Pedagogical Poem"). The English translation by Ivy and Tatiana Litvinov carries the title The Road to Life, and the subtitle "An Epic of Education." Froese called this work "an epic to the Russian wayward youth of the revolution and of the Civil War."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>A. S. Makarenko, Werke [A. S. Makarenko, Works] vol. II eds. L. A. Kairow, G. S. Makarenko and J. N. Medynski, trans. from the Russian by Else Zaisser. (Berlin: Volk und Wissen Volkseigener Verlag, 1960), 511, 512; The text of this volume is taken from the 1957 Moscow edition of Makarenko's Collected Works in Seven Volumes. Hereafter cited as Werke.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 511, 512.

<sup>13</sup>Froese, "Das Pädagogisch-Literarische Werk Makarenkos," 114. It seems appropriate to point to a common misconception of the relationship between a popular Soviet film classic called Putevka v zhizn and Makarenko's Pedagogicheskaja poema. Putevka v zhizn was produced by Nikolai Ekk and given the title "The Road to Life." It was said to have been the first Soviet sound film. Because the film had a strong resemblance to people and events in Makarenko's Pedagogicheskaja poema--

Makarenko began writing part one in 1928 and with the encouragement of Gorky completed this major task in September 1935. Meanwhile, part one of the Pedagogical Poem was published in January 1934, part two in July/August 1935, and part three in March 1936.<sup>14</sup> Because the Pedagogical Poem is central to understanding Makarenko's pedagogical theories, it will be examined in greater detail at the end of this section.

Toward the end of his life, Makarenko shifted his pedagogical interest to family education and the decisive role parents play in educating their children. Based on the material his wife had collected, Makarenko wrote A Book for Parents, published in 1937, and which remained a best-seller for over a quarter century.<sup>15</sup> Makarenko was only able to

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which incidentally was published after Ekk had made the film, (parts I, II, and III in 1934, 1935, and 1936 respectively)-and because the film had gained great popularity abroad, the 1936 English translation of Pedagogicheskaja poema seems to have taken the film's popular and already familiar title for promotional reasons. Ever since, Makarenko's trilogy has been translated under the title The Road to Life and is known in the literature under this title. See Dunstan, "Demythologizing Makarenko," 28.

<sup>14</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 13, pp. 17, 32, 37.

<sup>15</sup>Urie Bronfenbrenner, in A Book for Parents, Introduction p. IX. Bronfenbrenner states that "This volume has not only been widely read but also widely used; it has served as a practical guide for dealing with children in families, schools and institutions throughout the Communist world." He holds that the closest counterpart to A Book for Parents in the West is Benjamin Spock's Baby and Childcare, with the difference that Makarenko's book is not dealing with physical health but with character development. See also Götz Hillig in "Makarenkos Entdeckung der Familie," in Hundert

write the first volume of this monograph (he had intended four), due to his sudden death on April 1, 1939.

During 1937 and 1938, when Makarenko was living in Moscow, he wrote Honor, a novel dealing with his brother Vitalii's experiences as an officer during World War I. Lehrman observed that in this novel Makarenko examined the moral content of honor, and that "There is a sympathetic character of a father in it who, in Soviet biography, is presumed to be a model of his own parent."<sup>16</sup> Froese called Honor a family novel, in which Makarenko, like Pestalozzi in Leonard and Gertrude, wanted to show how in a poor household true family happiness can exist where order, modesty, diligence and love combine.<sup>17</sup> Honor was serialized in the journal Oktiabr' in 1937 and 1938.<sup>18</sup>

Bringing to a conclusion his writings on the Gorky Colony and the Dzerzhinsky Commune, Makarenko, in 1938, began to write Flags on the Battlement, a novel in three parts based on the development of the Dzerzhinsky Commune

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Jahre, 119-140. Hillig discusses the genesis and reception of A Book for Parents. He explains that Makarenko, formerly hostile toward the family, made the surprising decision to write A Book for Parents because of the radical changes in Soviet social policies from 1935 to 1936, which reinstated the family into its traditional rights and duties of child rearing.

<sup>16</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 127; Lehrman, "The Pedagogical Ideas," 195.

<sup>17</sup>Froese, "Das Pädagogisch-Literarische Werk Makarenkos," 116.

<sup>18</sup>Werke, vol. VI, 489.

from 1930 to 1932. This work has been translated into English under the title Learning to Live. In this novel Makarenko represents himself in the guise of the director of the commune, next to whom stand four central pupils. Makarenko considered this novel to be a sequel to Road to Life. He wanted to show how the insights gained in the Gorky Colony were applied in the Dzerzhinsky Commune. Flags on the Battlement was published in August /September 1939.<sup>19</sup>

Five months before his death, Makarenko began, but never completed the novel The Ways of a Generation (November/December 1938). Froese called this work volksbildnerisch (meaning "educating the people"): in it Makarenko wanted to demonstrate "how everybody can be educated to attain social and human worth."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Werke, vol. III, 501; A. S. Makarenko, Learning to Live. Flags on the Battlement (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1953), 643, hereafter cited as Learning to Live; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 13, 139.

<sup>20</sup>Froese, "Das Pädagogisch-Literarische Werk Makarenko's," 116.

### Makarenko's Shorter Published Works

During the 1930s, Makarenko published extensively on a variety of topics. A collection of his smaller publications can be found in volumes one, seven, nine, and twelve of the Gesammelte Werke, Marburg Edition from the time periods of 1923-1931, 1932-1936, 1937, and 1938-1939. In addition, volume six contains a small work on education titled "Methods of Organizing the Pedagogical Process," which Makarenko wrote in Fall/Winter of 1935 and which details the organization and education of a collective in seventeen short sections, under headings such as "Building a Collective," "Organs of Self-Government," "Discipline and Regimen," and "Perspectives." These texts, with the exception of volumes six and twelve, will be the main sources of information for this section.<sup>21</sup>

Makarenko's shorter writings from 1932 to 1936 (the period in which he was director of the educational section in the Dzerzhinsky Commune and deputy head of the new Department of Labor Colonies in Kiev), are collected in volume seven of the Marburg Edition and comprise twenty-one

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<sup>21</sup>Vols. 6 and 12 of the GW Marburg Edition have not yet been published. For "Methods of Organizing the Pedagogical Process" see Werke, vol. V, 13-106.

separate texts. These writings essentially focus on three themes: reports and articles on the Dzerzhinsky Commune (1932-36); memoirs and reminiscences of Gorky, including "My First Teacher" and "Maxim Gorky's Part in My Life" (1936); and commentaries on the plan for a new constitution of the USSR (1936).<sup>22</sup> The article "Pedagogues Shrug Their Shoulders" (1932) holds a special place in this tableau for the reason that it deals with the pedagogical principles Makarenko applied in the Dzerzhinsky Commune during a particularly critical phase of his life.

Makarenko's shorter publications of the year 1937 are compiled in the Marburg Edition, volume nine, comprising thirty-four texts and articles written in Moscow where he spent his first year as a full-time writer. Included in this volume are the following publications: fourteen journalistic contributions, written for public occasions and special events; two narrations, published in youth-and-children's journals; six articles dealing with the reorganization of the Union of Soviet Writers, (Makarenko had become a member of the Union of Soviet Writers on June 4, 1934, evidently on Gorky's suggestion);<sup>23</sup> eight literary criticisms and four articles on pedagogy including "More

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<sup>22</sup>Six of the above-mentioned twenty-one texts have been included for the first time in a collection of Makarenko's works. Of the twenty-one texts, ten are published here in their original version for the first time.

<sup>23</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 120.



Activity During Play," and "The Aim of Education."

Hillig points out that during 1937, Makarenko's pedagogical writings took little space within his literary activities. He cites Makarenko's wife, Galina Stachievna, who explained that Makarenko "needed to be a tactician." In her words,

The People's Commissariat for Education denied him recognition, the journals did not print his articles, the Sovetskaia pedagogika [Soviet pedagogy] and the Uchitel'skaia gazeta [Teachers' Gazette] had not published any of his articles. Yet at the same time he gave lectures in auditoriums which seated thousands of people. A complicated and delicate situation.<sup>24</sup>

Included in volume nine is an announcement (composed by Makarenko) that appeared in Radioprogrammy No. 42 [Radio program no. 42] on September 11, 1937. In this notice Makarenko gave an overview of eight lectures on family education that he was to give on Radio Moscow. (These lectures were broadcast by Radio Moscow between September and December 1937). It is noteworthy, Hillig believes, that Makarenko reached an audience of millions through broadcasts and through publication of his article "The Aim of Education" in the government newspaper Izvestiia

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<sup>24</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 9, 185. Until 1936, Makarenko was in conflict with the influential and officially recognized "science of the child" called "pedology," which he refused to implement in the Gorky Colony. Although pedology was officially banned on July 4, 1936, there remained in the official educational circles reservation and resistance toward Makarenko.

(proceedings), which had wide circulation.<sup>25</sup>

In examining Makarenko's shorter published works from the period 1938 to 1939, volume thirteen of the Marburg Edition will be used as the major source. Some twenty-six articles by Makarenko were published during the last period of his life. They include journalistic contributions on current events, essays connected to his activities within the Union of Soviet Writers, (e.g. "Conversations with Beginning Writers"), and stories. Among his pedagogical writings were "Problems of Child Rearing in Soviet Schools" (March 23, 1938), "Character Training in School" (May 7, 1938), and the brochure "Children in the Land of Socialism" (January 1939). This pamphlet was written by Makarenko for the 1939 World's Fair in New York City and distributed in the Soviet Pavilion.<sup>26</sup>

Makarenko wrote a number of unpublished plays, including "The Rings of Newton" (1934) and "The Concern for Man" (1935-1936).<sup>27</sup> His play "Major" written in 1935 and submitted under the pseudonym Andrej Galchenko, won an award at an all-Russian playwriting competition.<sup>28</sup>

In December 1938, shortly before his death, Makarenko wrote a film script at the invitation of Detfilm

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 145, 189, 185.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., vol. 13, pp. 122, 107, 108, 137.

<sup>27</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 121, 131.

<sup>28</sup>Werke, vol. II, 337-434, 517.

(children's films) titled "A Real Character" with the theme of character education. According to M. J. Bobrowskaja, W. J. Gmurman, and G. S. Makarenko, Makarenko saw in film and drama a most effective and indispensable form for education and instruction. He was constantly anxious to find new forms, a new genre, for conveying the essential principles of Soviet education to a wide audience.<sup>29</sup>

The film script "An Official Mission" occupied Makarenko during the last months of his life. In this scenario he wanted to stress the importance of attentiveness and alertness in education. While on a suburban train to Moscow, returning from the convalescent home for Soviet writers in Golicyno to deliver the completed film script, he died of a heart attack. The play remained incomplete and was published in the 1952 edition of Makarenko's Sochineniya v Semi Tomakh (Collected works in seven volumes).<sup>30</sup>

Makarenko's prolific writing achievements were collected and published under the title Sochineniya v Semi Tomakh (Collected works in seven volumes) in 1952. These writings can be found in the Academy of Pedagogical Science Edition of the RSFSR. See also the Introduction for a comprehensive discussion of the Academy of Pedagogical Science Edition.

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., vol. VI, 490. M. J. Bobrowskaja, W. J. Gmurman and G. S. Makarenko wrote the commentary in vol. VI.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 397-458; 491-92.

Pedagogicheskaja poema

(The Road to Life)

An examination of Makarenko's most important and best-known work, his trilogy entitled Pedagogical Poem, (hence referred to by its English title The Road to Life), is essential to understanding Makarenko's theories of education, particularly his concepts of collective education. Written in the first person, The Road to Life gives a diary-like history of his life with the besprizorniki in the Gorky Colony. It is filled with vivid recollections of Makarenko's pupils, of events too unusual and complex for quick solutions, and of his own problems in educating utterly forsaken children. Makarenko showed in his story how, against this background of unfamiliar circumstances, he began to build his pedagogical principles.

Scholars have found it difficult to classify The Road to Life, a blending of Makarenko's thoughts, soliloquies, and practical work; as Patrick Alston stated, it is a narrative wherein "education, politics and art fuse."<sup>31</sup> Medinsky (one of Makarenko's biographers) held that

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<sup>31</sup>Patrick L. Alston, "Landmarks in the Literature: Super Soviet Pedagogue." New York University Education Quarterly 10, (Summer 1979): 32.

The Road to Life, a work of literature dealing with education has no counterpart in the world. Froese cited Louis Aragon (1897-1982, French poet, novelist and journalist), who judged that The Road to Life would be secured a place in world literature. Other writers and scholars have affirmed belief that The Road to Life will remain a classic amongst pedagogical writings.<sup>32</sup>

The book's language is vivid and pictorial. Makarenko once remarked during a conversation with young writers that a good prose author must be thoroughly familiar with the works of the best poets, that he should know them by heart, and that he should be able to hear how a word sounds and how the tones within the words change.<sup>33</sup>

The Road to Life is organized into three sections, each segment corresponding to a distinct phase in the life of the Gorky Colony and its three geographic locations. Alston called it "the artistic re-creation of the formative

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<sup>32</sup>Y. Medinsky, Introduction, in The Road to Life, vol. 1, p. XVIII; Leonhard Froese, "Der historische Makarenko," in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 12; Jürgen Schleumer citing Elisabeth Heimpel, in Pestalozzis 'Stanser Brief' und Makarenkos 'Pädagogisches Poem.' Ein Pädagogisch-Methodischer Vergleich. [Pestalozzi's 'Stanser letter' and Makarenko's 'Pedagogical Poem.' A pedagogic-methodical comparison]. (Essen: Neue Deutsche Schule Verlagsgesellschaft, 1974), 10. The comparison between Makarenko and Pestalozzi has been made by Jürgen Schleumer, Herman Nohl, Wolfgang Klafki, Elisabeth Heimpel to name but a few.

<sup>33</sup>A. S. Makarenko, "Gespräch mit angehenden Schriftstellern" [Conversation with beginning writers], in Werke, vol. VII, 179.

years of the Gorky Colony."<sup>34</sup> Part one, the years 1920 to 1923, deals with building up the colony for juvenile lawbreakers in Triby near Poltava, in the eastern Ukraine, and the task of establishing a pupil collective as a social group form. Part two, from 1923 to 1926, describes the life of the collective in the "second colony," the abandoned estate of Trepke in Kovalevka near Poltava. Part three, the years 1926 to 1928, includes relocation of the colony to a badly run-down, disorganized home for neglected and homeless children at Kuryazh near Kharkov (in the Eastern Ukraine), Makarenko's departure from the colony and his functions at the newly founded Dzerzhinsky Commune.<sup>35</sup>

Some claim to have discovered certain factual inaccuracies in Makarenko's account; others have seen The Road to Life as a novel in which Makarenko strove to express experiences and insights by fusing factual events with poetic fiction.<sup>36</sup> The following examination of The Road to Life derives from Makarenko's own perspective. In Frederic Lilge's words, (taken from Lilge's writings on Makarenko), "due emphasis will be given to the originality and force of Makarenko's educational ideas as they arose from his

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<sup>34</sup>P. L. Alston, "Watch on the Elbe," 50.

<sup>35</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Introduction, p. XI.

<sup>36</sup>Fedir Naumenko, "Diese ersten . . ." [These first-ones], in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 42, 44-46; Georg Lukacs, "Makarenko 'Der Weg ins Leben'" [Makarenko, 'the road to life'] in Hillig and Weitz, eds., Wege der Forschung, 264-322, in particular 268-69, 309.

personal experience."<sup>37</sup>

Most of this section is based on two sources: The Road to Life, translated by Ivy and Tatiana Litvinov, and Ein Pädagogisches Poem vols. 3-5 of the Gesammelte Werke, Marburg Edition. Throughout this section reference will be to the English translation of The Road to Life. To sustain authenticity, quotations from this volume have been compared with the Marburg Edition, which is based on the first and most extensive Russian edition of 1934-1936. Footnotes will indicate when it became necessary to refer to the Marburg Edition. The author has translated corresponding quotations into English.

On October 18, 1938, during a discussion between Makarenko and a group of readers in Leningrad, Makarenko stated his intentions in writing The Road to Life thus, "In The Road to Life I dealt with the question of how best to describe man in a community, how to describe man's struggle with himself, and the struggle of the community for its worth and its personality."<sup>38</sup>

According to Makarenko, this task was initially accompanied by doubts and deep uncertainty. He had been informed by the Chief of the Gubernia Department of Public Education that no one wanted to take on this work with the "homeless kids." "Whoever I ask, they turn me down--'No,

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<sup>37</sup>Frederic Lilge, A. S. Makarenko, 2.

<sup>38</sup>A. S. Makarenko, Learning to Live, 643.

thanks--we don't want to get our throats cut!'" In response to Makarenko's doubtful query, "And supposing I really do make a muddle?" the chief answered, "Muddle or no muddle, the work's got to be done. . . . The main thing isn't just a colony for juvenile delinquents, but . . . social re-education. We've got to create the new man, you know--our sort of man. That's your job!"<sup>39</sup>

In part one of The Road to Life Makarenko spoke of the "inglorious beginnings of the Gorky Colony." Given 150 million rubles (this enormous amount was contingent on inflation), he was told to establish his colony in the abandoned buildings of the former tsarist colony for delinquents, whose inmates had deserted the place in 1917. The box-shaped buildings were situated on a sandy hill in the clearing of a large pine forest six kilometers from Poltava. Makarenko found the structures carefully stripped of doors, windows, furniture, and stoves. The local peasants had dug up the fruit trees from the orchard. With the help of Kalina Ivanovich, a middle-aged manager of supplies, the "organizational period had begun."<sup>40</sup> One of the barracks was put into some liveable shape as window panes, doors, and stoves were reinstalled. A few small rooms were prepared for the teachers to live in and one large room served as combined bedroom, dining room, and

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<sup>39</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 1-5.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 6-11.



classroom. Finally, two teachers arrived--Ekaterina Grigoryevna and Lydia Petrovna who was still very young and inexperienced. Makarenko had almost despaired of finding teachers, as "no one seemed anxious to devote himself to the task of creating the new man in our forest"--everyone was afraid of our 'tramps.'"<sup>41</sup>

Makarenko recalled that with everything in readiness, on the fourth of December 1920, the first six youth arrived. Four were about eighteen years old and brought with them long criminal records of theft and armed robbery. The others, a little younger, had been accused of theft. For example, Burun, seventeen years old, had been a member of an adult gang of thieves who had all been shot."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 12-13. Ekaterina Grigoryevna was the fictional name in The Road to Life for Elizaveta Fedorovna Grigorovich, the wife of a priest in Kriukov with whom Makarenko had a close relationship. (See chapter 2 of this dissertation) She joined Makarenko's colony as a teacher on October 10, 1920. In The Road to Life, vol. 1, pp. 13-14, Makarenko introduced her as follows: "Ekaterina Grigoryevna . . . was a seasoned pedagogue . . . . [She] had a grave beauty of countenance, emphasized by black eyebrows almost masculine in their straightness. She was always neat, in clothes that had been preserved, as by a miracle, and Kalina Ivanovich justly observed . . . 'You've got to watch your step with a girl like that!'" In "Types and Prototypes" of the Pedagogical Poem, [The Road to Life] Makarenko characterized Ekaterina Grigoryevna in this manner, "She remains one of the main characters . . . . A positive, quiet type. In all discussions she has to present certain concerns, must act as a brake and thus stimulate reflection." In GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 336.

<sup>42</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 10, 32. See also Fedir Naumenko, "Diese Ersten . . . ." [These first ones], in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 42-46. Based on his research, Naumenko found that the number of the first arrivals in the colony was larger than six.

These new arrivals were all openly disrespectful, refusing to attend school or help with the chores around the colony. In the evening they disappeared for their own nightly adventures. A week later, one of them, Bendyuk, was arrested for robbery and murder. Night after night, plundered travellers from the nearby road cried for help. Makarenko wrote:

The lonely forest surrounding the colony, the empty shells of our buildings, our ten camp beds, an ax and spade which were our only tools, the five boys who were in frank opposition not only to our pedagogical system, but to the very principles of human culture itself, all this had--quite frankly--little to do with our conventional school practice.<sup>43</sup>

Makarenko soon obtained a revolver from the authorities, to protect the colony from "the knights of the road."<sup>44</sup> For him and the teachers, the first months were a time of despair and futile efforts. Searching for some answers, Makarenko spent the first winter reading more books on education than ever before. The lesson he learned was that there was no theory that could guide him, rather, he would have to wrestle his own theories from real life situations. He describes how it dawned on him that theoretical formulations offered no answers and the need for hurry that he felt, as he could not afford to lose a single day. With unmistakable urgency he wrote, "What I needed was immediate analysis of each situation, followed by immediate

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<sup>43</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3 Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 11.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 13.

action."<sup>45</sup> This is not surprising if one reads:

The colony was becoming more and more like a den of thieves and cutthroats. The attitude of the boys to their teachers was rapidly crystallizing into habitual insolence and frank hooliganism. By now . . . they were rudely demanding their dinner, throwing plates about the dining room, making open play with their Finnish knives, and inquiring facetiously into the extent of everybody's possessions.<sup>46</sup>

A turning point in Makarenko's relationship with the students, and in their relationship to discipline came when Makarenko, in utter exasperation, slipped off the "tightrope of pedagogical practice."<sup>47</sup> After one of the students, Zadarov, had insolently used the familiar "thou" in answer to one of Makarenko's requests, Makarenko, filled with rage and driven to despair, raised his hands and struck Zadarov in the face, so hard that he fell against the stove. Makarenko, later in life said, "Striking a blow is no method. That was a sign of desperation."<sup>48</sup> Since all other methods had failed, for the moment Makarenko was determined to be a dictator, even though this incident had been harder on him than on Zadarov. Subsequently, Makarenko received much better cooperation from the group.<sup>49</sup>

The year 1921 saw significant growth of the colony.

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<sup>45</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, pp. 19-20.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 21-22. See also A. S. Makarenko Learning to Live, 648.

<sup>49</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, pp. 25-27.

In February, "real waifs in real rags" and in a state of profound neglect arrived. By March, thirty boys had entered the colony, and more teachers and an old housekeeper had joined. In the third chapter of part one, "Description of our Primary Needs," Makarenko tells of the indescribable poverty of the colony during the first winter. Food and clothes were in greatest need. Few children had boots; the others wound pieces of cloth around their feet, tying them on with string. Makarenko made his rounds of the District Education Office and other government supply bureaus to obtain food for his pupils. It was not at all clear who among the various public bodies was responsible for providing food for the colony. Makarenko received what was known as kondyor, a thin millet gruel. Sometimes he was able to get a little meat or candy that was handed out in rations to "mental defectives" (not "moral defectives" as the residents of the colony were known in those days). The boys, perpetually hungry, resorted to their own methods of "finding" food. They developed their own food campaign by taking excursions to the market where they would snatch their pillage. Yet, Makarenko was not discouraged, because they all shared in the same plight:

Our unutterable poverty had its good side: everyone--director, teachers and pupils--was equally hungry and equally needy. . . . All through the winter I had practically no soles on my boots, and bits of portyanki (strips of cloth worn instead of socks) were always

sticking out.<sup>50</sup>

In those days, regular, daily stealing within the colony became a major problem: the teacher's salaries, the monthly supply of lard, the old housekeepers entire belongings mysteriously vanished during the night. Measures of persuasion, shaming, even threats of expulsion were ineffective. In fact, the boys were impressed by the talent of the thieves. They did not realize that they were robbing themselves. Makarenko had hoped that the group, protecting its collective interests, would assert itself and stop the thieving. But the boys "fell again under the spell of the sporting interest: who was it that worked so adroitly?"<sup>51</sup>

Once, sixteen-year-old, Taranet, came to Makarenko to offer some fish he had caught and cooked. Makarenko did not accept the "gift." In disbelief, Taranet asked what was wrong. Makarenko explained that Taranet could not claim personal ownership to something obtained through the use of communal utensils such as nets, pails, cooking implements, baking oil, etc. Taranet slowly began to comprehend that the fish was for all members of the colony. Makarenko became aware that his young charges, who were (in Lilge's words) "inured to filth and vermin, with whom it had become habitual to lie, steal, gamble and knife one another," that these little vagabonds needed to develop some form of group

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 40. See also pp. 24-40.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 41-44.

awareness and an appreciation of communal life. Makarenko knew that he needed to awaken and support in the colonists a sense of loyalty and community allegiance, and that his basic task was to create a collective, (again in Lilge's words) with "sufficient psychological authority to break his young hooligans of their criminal and anarchical habits, and to replace them with a sense of belonging."<sup>52</sup>

Makarenko's hope of creating a collective spirit found its first humble fulfillment when the colony "went in for operations the importance of which extended far beyond the interest of the colony--operations of national importance." The colonists had been asked by the state forest guard to assist in fighting illegal tree felling by guarding the state forest. This risky undertaking brought the boys together in a new way. Makarenko observed:

It was not so much moral exhortation or occasional outbursts of wrath, as this fascinating and vital struggle with real things which fostered the first germs of a healthy collective spirit. Of an evening we would hold lengthy discussions, laughing our fill, sometimes embroidering upon the subjects of our adventures, and drawing ever closer to one another in the thick of these adventures, till we gradually became that integral unit known as the Gorky Colony.<sup>53</sup>

In these days, Makarenko began to dream of creating a farm that would consolidate the material side of the colony's existence. As helpers joined, a smithy,

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 38-39; Lilge, A. S. Makarenko, 15.

<sup>53</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 39. See also The Road to Life, vol. 1, 66-67.

carpenter's shop, and wheelwright's shop were erected. A crude plough and a gig were somehow put together, and the jolly ring of the anvil reverberated throughout the colony. Kalina Ivanovich (who had "found" an abandoned horse) began to plough and sow oats in a clearing.

Makarenko observed that life in the colony had become more complex and much more cheerful. Also during this time, while on an excursion to fetch some wood for the colony, Makarenko and Kalina Ivanovich located an abandoned noble's estate, "Trepke." This was a settlement of some dozen buildings situated on top of a hill; it included houses, huts, sheds, and stables, all badly dilapidated. A river, the Kolomak, bordered the estate, an orchard sloped down the hill, and a five-story mill had sails going full swing. Makarenko immediately recognized the suitability of the entire settlement for a labor colony and lost no time in conveying his interest to the chief of the Gubernia Department of Public Education. One week later his proposal to obtaining the Trepke estate was approved. Nevertheless, it would take two years before the new colony was ready for occupation.

As much as the colony had gained in its first struggle to foster a young community, the arrival of numerous new members shook the far from stable collective to its foundations. Makarenko described the new arrivals:

The overwhelming majority of them were semi-literate or completely illiterate . . . their attitude to their

fellow man had hardened into the pseudo-heroic pose of aggressive self-defense. . . . [Most of them] only gradually and slowly approached the acquisition of human culture, and the poorer and hungrier we were, the longer it took them.<sup>54</sup>

But he observed:

Although in its general outlines the picture was melancholic enough, the sprouts of the collective spirit which had begun to show themselves during that first winter, burgeoned mysteriously in our community, and these sprouts had to be rescued at all costs. . . . I consider my chief merit to lie in the fact that I recognized this important development at the time, and estimated it at its proper value. Tending these first shoots turned out to be a process of such arduousness and length that, had I been able to foresee it, I would probably have taken fright and thrown up the sponge. The saving factor was that--incurable optimist as I am!--I always believed myself to be within an inch of victory.<sup>55</sup>

Still, serious setbacks and frequent breakdowns in discipline brought Makarenko, at times, close to despair. He had to deal with knife fights, drunkenness, card playing, gambling, and even an infestation of lice. The new members, utterly unaccustomed to discipline, were even less willing to submit to any principles of orderly conduct than were the first colonists who "had only been brought to recognize law and order on the most elementary level."<sup>56</sup> Makarenko fumed:

I was enraged by the disgracefully low level of pedagogical technique, and my own lack of technical skill. And I pondered with disgust and fury over the science of pedagogy. 'How many thousands of years has

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<sup>54</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, pp. 94-95.

<sup>55</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 56-57. See also The Road to Life, vol. 1, 96.

<sup>56</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, p. 93. See also 97, 101, 117, 131.



it been in existence?' I thought. 'What names--what brilliant ideas--Pestalozzi, Rousseau, Natorp, Blonsky! How many volumes, what reams of paper, how much fame! And at the same time--a void. It all amounts to nothing, and no one can tell me how to deal with one young hooligan! There is no method, no means, no logic --nothing!'<sup>57</sup>

In winter and spring of 1922, several "terrific explosions" in the Gorky Colony followed one another in rapid succession: anti-semitism had suddenly sprung up with the arrival of a young Jewish member; one of the six girls in the colony committed infanticide; a typhus epidemic broke out; a group of colonists fought with lads in the neighboring village, using knives and firearms; colonists at night broke into village larders and cellars; there were raids on melon fields.

Makarenko remembered how in autumn of this difficult year (1922) the gloomiest period of the colony's entire history began setting in. Even the teachers' spirit of optimism, particularly that of Ekaterina Grigoryevna, had given way to doubt. Ekaterina wondered, "Supposing we are making a terrible mistake. Supposing there isn't any collective, any collective at all." And Makarenko, admitting that he too was at times overcome with thoughts of stopping everything, reasoned that everybody was tired and that success was therefore impossible. On the surface however, in front of the colonists and members of staff,

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 179; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3 Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 109; The Road to Life, vol. 1, 179.

Makarenko tried to be "energetic and confident."<sup>58</sup>

And then Makarenko surprised himself. "I do not know, myself, how it was that I took up military training with such ardor--it must have been in obedience to some unconscious pedagogical instinct."<sup>59</sup> Everyday the colony gathered for one or two hours to do exercises in military gymnastics. The boys enjoyed this greatly, regarding the activity on the drill field as a new game. Makarenko observed:

The first thing I noticed was the good influence of a proper military bearing. The whole outward appearance of the colonist changed--he became slender and more graceful, stopped slouching against table or wall, could hold himself erect with ease and freedom, without feeling the need of props of any sort.<sup>60</sup>

Until then, signals within the colony were given by ringing a bell. Now, two cornets were purchased and several colonists went daily into the city (Poltava) to learn to play the instrument. Signals were given on the cornet and sonorous sounds reverberated across the colony. James Bowen viewed these events as a sign of the colony's rapid development into a quasi-military academy. Makarenko called

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<sup>58</sup>The Road to Life, 314-319; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 187-88.

<sup>59</sup>The Road to Life, 319.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 321; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 190.

it "commander pedagogy."<sup>61</sup>

In winter of 1923, Makarenko reported that the colony had made many "important organizational discoveries" that were to determine the forms of the collective for a long time to come. He wrote that in the colony's forest an important institution originated and that it all started with a mere bagatelle. What happened was that a group of boys had gone out into the forest to collect firewood. At one point Burun bragged that his "detachment" had brought in twelve cartloads. Makarenko commented:

The word 'detachment' was an expression used in that period when the waves of revolution had not yet been diverted into the orderly ranks of regiments and divisions. [Partisan] Guerilla warfare, especially in the Ukraine . . . was carried on exclusively by [such] detachments. A detachment might contain several thousand or less than a hundred members. . . . Our colonists had a special partiality for the military-guerilla [partisan] romanticism of the revolutionary struggle<sup>62</sup>.

When the wood-felling season was over, Burun's detachment was not dissolved but put in charge of building hotbeds for the second colony in Trepke. Burun assumed the role of commander of his detachment and a second one was added under the leadership of Zadorov. Eventually all the colonists were organized into detachments, in the charge of a commander. In Makarenko's words:

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<sup>61</sup>Bowen, Soviet Education, 85; see also GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 190, 203.

<sup>62</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, pp. 348-49; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 205.

The system of detachments was finally worked out by spring. The detachments became smaller and the colonists were distributed into the different workshops. The cobblers always had the number four, the smiths always the number one, the grooms the number two and the pig keepers the number ten. At first we had no sort of charter. The commanders were appointed by myself, and by spring I was beginning to call more and more often discussions with the commanders which the lads gave the more pleasing name of 'Commanders' Councils.' I soon got used to undertaking nothing of importance without calling a Commanders' Council; and gradually the appointment of commanders themselves was left to the Council.<sup>63</sup>

In spring of 1923, the detachment system was further differentiated. Makarenko named it "action detachment" or "mixed detachment."<sup>64</sup> He stressed that this differentiation turned out to be the most important invention of the collective because it enabled other detachments to be fused into a firm and single collective. Each mixed detachment operated for only a short period of time on a specific assignment. In the mixed detachments the roles of individuals usually differed from those assigned them in their permanent detachments, e.g., the commander of a permanent detachment would not be commander in a mixed detachment. Makarenko commented with satisfaction:

And it was thanks to this system that our colony distinguished itself in 1926 by its striking ability to adapt itself to any task, while for the fulfillment of the various tasks there was always an abundance of capable and independent organizers--persons who could be relied upon. . . .

The system of mixed detachments made life in the colony

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<sup>63</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 207; The Road to Life, vol. 1, 351.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 208, 310; The Road to Life, vol. 1, p. 352.

exciting and most interesting; it was defined by the continuously alternating functions of working and of organizing; by the practice of being in command and in subordination, in collective and in individual activity.<sup>65</sup>

After almost three years of hard work Makarenko felt that, although he had been making many mistakes due to inexperience, he had been able to create a collective out of misguided and backward children. Lilge put it like this, "Makarenko had found a type of social organization through which he might control and reform the behavior of the young hooligans."<sup>66</sup>

When considering the growth rate of the colony and the difficulties encountered during the first three years, it is surprising to learn of the extent of the program that Makarenko and his staff were able to implement. The efforts put forth could be considered heroic. Makarenko was fully aware of the often overwhelming duties that the teachers had to perform. Their work was officially divided into three segments: a main duty, work duty, and evening duty. In addition, the teachers gave lessons in the morning.

Makarenko viewed main duty as nothing short of hard labor, beginning at five o'clock in the morning and ending with the bedtime signal. Those on main duty had to oversee the daily routine, including distribution of meals,

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<sup>65</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, pp. 356-57; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 210-211.

<sup>66</sup>Lilge, A. S. Makarenko, 16.

supervising particular tasks, organizing supplies, changing linen and clothing, and resolving all fights and conflict among the pupils. Teachers scheduled for work duty took part in all ongoing work activities, including chores in the workshops, work in the forest, felling timber, activities in the fields and garden, and repairing inventory. Evening duty soon became routine for everyone alike, because the teachers, for lack of anywhere else to go except to their cold and unlit rooms, gathered in the colonist's dormitories for evening activities.<sup>67</sup>

These evening hours with tea were impatiently awaited by the colonists; they became a forum for games, discussions, and telling stories. Often reading sessions were arranged. Makarenko established a library in the colony, that included Russian classics and Maxim Gorky's works, which were read the most. The story of Gorky's life strongly impressed everyone. In disbelief the colonists asked, "So Gorky was like us?" Makarenko recalled how this ideas moved them deeply and joyously. It was through neighbors hearing the boys calling themselves "Gorky" that the colony became known as the Gorky Colony.<sup>68</sup>

In autumn 1923, after two years of repairing the Trepke estate, the move to the new colony began. On October

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<sup>67</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 77-78; The Road to Life, vol. 1, 131-32.

<sup>68</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 133-36; see also Marburg Study Edition, 107.

3, 1923, everybody, including the eighty colonists, were in readiness. Makarenko gave the military-style marching order and they set off. Part one of The Road to Life ends with Makarenko's description of this momentous event:

The boys drew themselves up for the salute, the drums thundered and the trumpets played the march past the colors. . . . We bade no farewell to the old place, though we harbored not the slightest hostility to it. It was not our way to look back. . . . In the yard of the second colony were gathered the entire staff and a number of villagers from Goncharovka. . . . We had entered upon a new era.<sup>69</sup>

#### Afterword

In the second volume of The Road to Life, Makarenko described the Gorky Colony at Trepke. The colony stayed two and a half years in its second home during which time Makarenko was able to test the organizational structure of the collective as it had evolved in the first colony. He examined the development of the collective and the functions of the detachments and the Commander Council, observing how the collective became stronger, step by step, and how it grew, over time, into a consolidated and integrated group of individuals. In 1926, Makarenko was asked by the Ukrainian People's Commissariat for Education to take over a failed children's colony. This colony was operating in the buildings of a decaying monastery at Kuryazh near Kharkov. The monastery still had an active chapel and is said to have

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<sup>69</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 415-16; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 246.

exuded a smell of incense, cabbage, and excrement.

Makarenko had doubts; the Kuryazh children were drenched in dirt and vermin and devoid of any form of human values and culture. But the colonists wanted to go there.

Volume three opens with Makarenko's description of how the Gorky Colony, consisting of 120 boys and girls moved to Kuryazh, taking over the run-down Kuryazh Colony and absorbing its 280 children. In a relatively short time, Makarenko and the Gorky Colonists, by applying the principles of the collective, succeeded in transforming this mass of drifting and dispirited waifs into socially conscious human beings.

During the time in Kuryazh, Makarenko came under severe criticism from authorities. The Road to Life ends with Makarenko's departure from Kuryazh and from the Gorky Colony in 1928, accused of having used non-Soviet methods and practices. An examination of these controversies will be the subject of chapter five.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE INFLUENCE OF MAXIM GORKY ON MAKARENKO

Gorky greatly influenced the formation of Makarenko's pedagogical creed and his activities as a writer.<sup>1</sup> They became friends and Gorky gave Makarenko courage in times of despair, help and guidance in times of need. But above all, it was Gorky who not only shaped Makarenko's social values, but also truly understood him as he gave expression to those values in his teaching and writing. When Gorky died in 1936, Makarenko wrote an essay, "Maxim Gorky's Part in My Life," in which he concluded:

Right up to his last days, Maxim Gorky was to remain my teacher. . . . His wide culture, his human greatness . . . his astute sense for what was untrue, cheap, low . . . his loathing for the old world and his love for man . . . are bound to remain an inexhaustible source of inspiration for many millions of men both today and in the future.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Götz Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 134.

<sup>2</sup>A.S. Makarenko, "Maksim Gor'kij in meinem Leben" [Maxim Gorky in my life], in GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 192; see also "Maxim Gorky's Part in my Life," in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 99; for further comparison see "Maxim Gorki in Meinem Leben," in Ausgewählte Pädagogische Schriften [Selected pedagogical writings]. Trans. by Friedrich Redlich (Berlin: Volk und Wissen Volkseigner Verlag, 1953), 154. Hereafter abbrev. APS.

Gorky, who was born in 1868, was twenty years older than Makarenko. As children, they had both witnessed an autocratic and poverty-ridden tsarist Russia. They had experienced epoch-making changes sweeping through Russia and the people awakening toward a new future. Both men hoped for radical social renewal that would better the lives of the Russian people, and they devoted their own lives to resolving the social problems of their time.

To better understand how Gorky came to shape the values and insights that had so powerful and lasting an impact on Makarenko, a brief look at Gorky's life and character is in order.

Gorky, the Way he Was

Most commonly, Gorky is characterized as a revolutionary fighter, a poet, and a writer. Stefan Zweig, Austrian biographer and novelist, described him as being "more humanistic than political, a revolutionary from sympathetic love of the people and not from monstrous hatred."<sup>3</sup> C. J. Hogarth wrote, "There is Gorky the made politician, and there is Gorky the born literary artist."<sup>4</sup> With the former, Makarenko had nothing to do.

His parents named him Alexei Maximovitch Peshkov but in 1892, he chose the pseudonym, "Gorky" (meaning "the bitter") when pressed for a signature in the office of a newspaper in Tiflis. He had written and published his first story, "Makar Chudra," in the local newspaper when he decided on the pseudonym that would become his new name.<sup>5</sup> Irwin Weil has suggested that Gorky, by choosing this name, sought to emphasize his bitterness against the abominations

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<sup>3</sup>Stefan Zweig, "An Introductory Essay," in Maxim Gorky, Selected Short Stories. (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1966), 7.

<sup>4</sup>C.J. Hogarth, "Introduction," in Maxim Gorky, Through Russia, trans. C.J. Hogarth. (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1959), vii.

<sup>5</sup>Nina Gourfinkel, Gorky, trans. Ann Feshbach (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1960), 7, 34.

of tsarist Russian backwardness and injustice.<sup>6</sup> Zweig wonders whether Gorky chose this name because he had witnessed early in life the bitter destiny of multitudes of poor Russians, or because Gorky had to wring out, with bitterness, his own life's achievements from a malevolent reality.<sup>7</sup> Zweig pointed out that Gorky was the first Russian poet and writer who, in contrast to the aristocratic descent of all other great Russian writers, arose from the illiterate Russian masses. In his words:

[The] infinite, limitless mass of millions. . . . mute, . . . . impotent with its monstrous strength. . . . dumb for a thousand years. . . . creates . . . a man from its midst . . . that he may give to the whole of humanity tidings of the Russian proletariat, of the lowly, the downtrodden and the oppressed.<sup>8</sup>

Gorky described his own life as having been "intense, confusing, astonishing."<sup>9</sup> His father died when he was a young child and he went to live with his grandfather, a poor Volga boatman, in a household that was brutal and hostile. One day the grandfather beat Gorky to a state of unconsciousness that left him sick for days. Of these experiences Gorky later wrote, "I developed a feeling for others. I became alert to their hurts and mine, quite as if

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<sup>6</sup>Irwin Weil, Gorky: His Literary Development and Influence on Soviet Intellectual Life. (New York: Random House, 1966), vii.

<sup>7</sup>Zweig, "An Introductory Essay," 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Maxim Gorky, Autobiography, trans. Isidor Schneider, (New York: The Citadel Press, 1949), 11.

the lacerating of the heart now rendered it sensitive."<sup>10</sup>

Almost fifty years later, when Makarenko was director of the Gorky Colony for juvenile lawbreakers and street waifs, he witnessed Gorky's capacity for compassion and his understanding of human suffering.

To provide the meager household with money, Gorky stole lumber and collected rags and bones which he sold. He attended school only briefly and had little formal education. His mother died when Gorky was 12 years old and his grandfather ordered the orphaned boy to leave the house.<sup>11</sup> He tumbled through a series of jobs, as a shop boy, house servant, cook's helper aboard a Volga steamer, dock worker, baker, bargeman and night watchman. Alone, he roamed for many years across Russia, often on foot. He saw close at hand the misery of the Russian workers and experienced the lot of the common, illiterate man, a reality filled with insults, humiliations, and poverty. Gorky wrote of these wanderings, "The life that stretched before me was an unbroken chain of hatred and cruelty."<sup>12</sup> At age 19, a soul weariness overcame him, and, using a cheap revolver, he fired a bullet into his chest. He survived, but the bullet

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 11, 19.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 483.

stayed lodged in his lung and permanently weakened his health.<sup>13</sup>

Although barely literate, Gorky became interested in books and soon was reading everything he could find, including the classics of Russian poetry and prose, the great European authors, and the new revolutionary literature.<sup>14</sup> Gorky kept a notebook and began taking notes, a practice he later recommended to Makarenko. He divided his nights between reading books and composing verses.<sup>15</sup>

Gorky's writings first became known to the Russian public at the close of the nineteenth century. In 1895, he wrote The Song of the Falcon, a hymn to the first Russian Revolution<sup>16</sup> In 1898, Gorky published two volumes of short stories, Sketches and Stories, which enjoyed great popular success. In these stories the common man, the vagabond, the barefooted tramp, nameless and without allegiance, became the new heroes; gypsy nomads, Volga fishermen, homeless peasants and, later, merchants, workers, and simple city dwellers began to speak. Gorky's characters came from all over Russia, from the steppe and the sea, from the cellars and flophouses at the outskirts of cities. They were the people Gorky had encountered during his long journeys on

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 488. See also Gourfinkel, Gorky, 137-38.

<sup>14</sup> Gorky, Autobiography, 374, 378.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 470, 404.

<sup>16</sup> Gourfinkel, Gorky, 36.

foot. People listened to the voice that spoke of a reality never before discussed in Russian literature. In Gorky's characters, with "their thirst for liberty, their heroic, bold actions, one sensed the image of a new man."<sup>17</sup> The Lower Depths, written in 1902, which portrayed a flophouse inhabited by tramps, was censored by tsarist authorities out of fear of its revolutionary allusions and its incendiary effect on audiences. Despite its being banned, The Lower Depths remained Gorky's most popular success. In fact, "never before in Russia, there has been a success of such dimensions."<sup>18</sup> Of the production in the Moscow Art Theatre, Stanislavski wrote:

There were countless curtain calls for the directors and the actors and for the playwright himself. Gorky was comic to behold when he appeared for the first time upon the platform . . . completely bewildered and not aware that he was supposed to bow. . . . Gorky became the hero of the day. They [People] followed him in the streets and to the theatre; crowds of admirers . . . gathered around him.<sup>19</sup>

Gorky had won the full attention of the Russian public and by 1905, the time of the Russian workers uprising, his name was firmly established internationally.<sup>20</sup> In 1913, the year after his return from a seven-year

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 8-10. See also Henri Troyant, Gorky. A Biography. (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1989), 65-66.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 28. See also Weil, Gorky, 38.

<sup>19</sup> Gourfinkel, Gorky, 27, 21. Stanislavsky was the director of and also actor at the Moscow Art Theatre.

<sup>20</sup> Weil, Gorky, 14.

[imposed] exile in Italy, Gorky published the first part of his autobiography My Childhood.<sup>21</sup> In 1921 Gorky left Russia for the second time, partly for reasons of health but also because of political harassment.<sup>22</sup> He lived in Sorrento, Italy, for seven years and from there conducted a voluminous correspondence, reading and answering every letter. He also reviewed hundreds of books and manuscripts sent him by Russian writers, listening to everyone, giving advice to all. Sometimes Gorky intervened where he could, giving his own money in situations where he sensed despair.<sup>23</sup> It was during this time of his stay in Sorrento that Makarenko and the Gorky colonists began an active correspondence with Gorky. In 1928, Gorky returned to the Soviet Union and during the summer (July 8 and 9, 1928) visited Makarenko and the Gorky Colony. Gorky died six years later, on June 18, 1936, in the Soviet Union, following pneumonia. He was sixty-eight. Of his contribution, Nina Gourfinkel wrote:

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<sup>21</sup> As a result of his popular and revolutionary writings, Gorky had been carefully watched by the police, who regarded him as "an extremely suspicious man." In January 1906, following the events of "Bloody Sunday" in 1905, Gorky was forced to leave Russia in the aftermath of this unsuccessful uprising. He returned to Russia in 1913. In Gourfinkel, Gorky, 36-45, 79. See also Alexander Kaun, Maxim Gorky and His Russia (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1968), 397.

<sup>22</sup> Gourfinkel, Gorky, 172. See also Herman Ermolaev in Maxim Gorky, Untimely Thoughts (New York: Paul S. Erikson, Inc., 1968), xii-xiii. Gorky had expressed his revulsion, protest, and indignation over the methods of the Bolshevik government that had seized power on Nov. 7, 1917, and against their reign of terror. See Ermolaev, vii.

<sup>23</sup> Gourfinkel, Gorky, 99, 55.



In story, in novel, and on stage, Gorky's heroes brought an active attitude before life, a glorification of labor, a training in the will to live, an enthusiasm for building new forms of life, a hatred for the old world.<sup>24</sup>

These same values and beliefs were practiced by Makarenko and echoed in his own prolific writings.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 28.

### Gorky Enters Makarenko's Life

In his essay, "Maxim Gorky's Part in My Life," Makarenko dramatically described how Gorky and his writings initially affected his life. He tells how in the years before the Japanese war of 1904-05 literary works appeared only after much delay. "It was with such clarity and blinding force that the unusually simple and wholesome name Maxim Gorky cut, as it were, through our darkness."<sup>25</sup> Early on, it was clear to Makarenko and his contemporaries that Gorky was not writing for entertainment or advancement, as some liked to put it. Makarenko emphasized that "Gorky's work was infinitely relevant to our lives as human and social beings." Particularly after 1905, Gorky's writings and life became the source of "our thoughts and of the work on ourselves."<sup>26</sup> Makarenko insisted, against the protest of Gorky himself, that The Lower Depths was of incomparable

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<sup>25</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 182; see also Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 82, and APS, 146.

<sup>26</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 182; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 82; APS, 146.

significance; to Makarenko, it was no less than the greatest piece in modern world literature.<sup>27</sup>

Makarenko was particularly touched by Luka, a pilgrim in the play, whom he thought personified the dramatic tension between wise yet pitiless knowledge and his no less wise and compassionate tenderness.<sup>28</sup> This same paradox later became central to Makarenko's own writings. When Gorky met Makarenko twenty-six years later, he commented on the dual aspect of Makarenko's personality: his sinister military bearing and his tender care for the colonists.<sup>29</sup>

In his work in the Gorky Colony, Makarenko keenly experienced the tension between compassion and gentleness and took a firm stand toward his charges.<sup>30</sup> He wrote:

I did not have the right to limit my attitudes for these children to mere sympathy and pity. I had long since realized that in order to rescue them I had to be demanding, stern and firm. I had to be as

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<sup>27</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 182; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 83; APS, 146. See also Weil, in Gorky, 37. Weil explains that Gorky never used the words "Lower Depths" for the title of his play, which he conceived variously as "Without Sun," "The Flophouse," "The Bottom," "On the Bottom of Life" and finally "On the Bottom."

<sup>28</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 183; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 83; APS, 146.

<sup>29</sup> See Maxim Gorki, "Arbeitskolonien für Kinder" [Labor colonies for children] in Hillig, ed., Makrenko in Deutschland 1927-1967, 52; see also Maxim Gorky, "An Excerpt from Across the Soviet Union," in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 112.

<sup>30</sup> For an explanation of why Makarenko chose the name "Gorky" for his colony, see Chapter, 3, section 3 "Pedagogicheskaja Poema." See also Marburg Study Edition, 107.

philosophical about their misery as they themselves viewed their situation.<sup>31</sup>

This theme also reoccurred in The Road to Life. In describing Ekaterina Grigoryevna, one of the teachers, Makarenko observed that despite her austerity, the children gravitated toward her. "She knew how to scold them in a motherly way . . . and displayed frank indignation at every meanness." Yet no one else could talk with such compassionate feelings to a small chap.<sup>32</sup>

The Lower Depths evoked in Makarenko the importance of responsibility; he drew a parallel between the riffraff of the doss-house and his fellow colonists, whom, for many years, he had cared for. Makarenko knew that under the old tsarist regime his charges would have ended up in the doss-house as well, while in the new world, "well, there is just no comparison."<sup>33</sup> Makarenko, in his essay on Gorky, pondered how the revolution had brought about social change and a new sense of responsibility. He remembered how in prerevolutionary times, Gorky, filled with passion and hatred for the old world, had demanded "with his unwavering

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<sup>31</sup> This passage was cited by Gorky in "Arbeitskolonien für Kinder" and is part of a preface that Makarenko wrote to the biographies of his charges. In Hillig, Makarenko in Deutschland 1927-1967, 54; in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 114-115.

<sup>32</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, 80-81; The Road to Life, vol.1, 137.

<sup>33</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 183; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 84; APS, 147.

optimism and joy that the storm rage more fiercely."

Makarenko wrote:

For us the path Gorky had traversed as both man and writer provided a model pattern of behavior. In Gorky we perceived tiny reflections of ourselves, perhaps even sensed at some unconscious level that one of our kind had broken through into the previously inaccessible sphere of true culture.<sup>34</sup>

Wanting to emulate Gorky, Makarenko originally thought he should do this through literature and, in 1914, wrote a story called "A Foolish Day," which he sent to Gorky. In a handwritten reply, the words of which Makarenko remembered to the end of his life, Gorky told him that he thought the subject matter was interesting but the treatment was a failure. For Makarenko, this letter marked a decisive moment in his life.

I realized that writing required considerable technique. . . . Finally real talent was vital and mine was obviously on the short side. . . . I said farewell to my dreams of writing, and indeed all the more so since I held the calling of a teacher in such high esteem. Fighting cultural backwardness was also possible in the role of a teacher.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> For this quotation, the translation by K. Judelson was used, in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 85-86; see also GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 184.

<sup>35</sup> For this quotation, the translation by K. Judelson was used, in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 86-87; see also GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 185 and APS, 148. There is a discrepancy over the date Makarenko wrote "A Foolish Day." G. Hillig and S. Weitz give the year 1915. See Marburg Study Edition, 105.

### Gorky's Influence on Makarenko's Pedagogical Work

Leonhard Froese summarized in one statement what Makarenko had clearly and frequently expressed in his writings--that Makarenko's pedagogical work could not be thought of without the influence of Maxim Gorky. Froese goes on to explain:

Gorky's early work, The Lower Depths attained significant importance for Makarenko, who . . . viewed this work as the most powerful, the most perfect play in the entire modern world literature. In this social tragedy there lies the true source for not only Makarenko's socialistic-revolutionary sentiments, but also for his social-pedagogical attitude. Constantly he [Makarenko] experienced the plaintiff call, 'no refuge!' as his own protest against the "social" conditions, which caused the ruin of man.<sup>36</sup>

When Makarenko was put in charge of a colony for street waifs and tramps, he felt there were no educational methods or theories to guide him in the new task of educating young delinquents. He considered his position almost hopeless, but feeling a strong inner relationship to Gorky's ideas, especially his general conception of man, he reread all of Gorky's books . He recommended that anyone starting out as a teacher do the same, not because they offered any methods of teaching or solutions to day-to-day

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<sup>36</sup> L.Froese, Triebkräfte, 226.

issues, but because they were filled with a great knowledge of man and of his boundless potential.<sup>37</sup>

In a letter of June, 1928, in which Makarenko asked Gorky for permission to dedicate his Pedagogical Poem to him, he explained, "It is a very practical tribute of my gratitude as I have found in your books all my pedagogical revelations. There can be no education if the worth of man is not placed at the center."<sup>38</sup> Throughout his work with his young charges in the Gorky Colony and the Dzerzhinsky Commune, Makarenko adhered to the conception of man that he found in Gorky's stories, novels, and plays. From the very beginning, Makarenko tried to see his young hooligans, his little anarchists and tramps through the eyes of Gorky, who, in a spirit of boundless optimism, depicted the good in each individual. To Makarenko, Gorky was an optimist, "not only in the sense that he looks forward to an era of man's happy future . . . but also because he discerns the good in every individual. Good not in the moral nor in the social sense, but in the sense of beauty and strength."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 185-86; see also Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 87; APS, 149.

<sup>38</sup> Anton S. Makarenko, Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1: Pädagogische Schriften 1922-1936 [Pedagogical works, vol. 1: Pedagogical writings, 1922-1936] (Berlin: Volk und Wissen Volkseigener Verlag, 1988), 383. Hereafter cited as Pädagogische Werke.

<sup>39</sup> For this quotation I have used the translation by K. Judelson in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 88. See also GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 186, and APS, 150.

It may be noteworthy that Gorky in My Childhood, written in 1913, which deals with his brutal upbringing, had the strength to say that the good, the healthy, and the creative in man will victoriously break through the layers of the common, the coarse, the vulgar and the vile in its hope for a better, more humane and light-filled existence.<sup>40</sup> Gorky saw even in the most violent "enemies" their "human strength and their finest human potential come to the fore quite unmistakably."<sup>41</sup> Makarenko wrote that although it may be difficult to see the good in each person, particularly when men live in an unhealthy society, it is nevertheless the task of the teacher to develop and bring out in man the finest, that which is strongest in a person. To approach a child with an optimistic assumption, even at the risk of making a mistake, is what every teacher should learn from Gorky. Makarenko observed that Gorky never extolled a person, that, although he saw the good in each individual, he did not fall into emotionalism or lower his standards of judgment. In the combination of optimism and sternness Makarenko found Gorky's "life wisdom."<sup>42</sup> This principle, later converted into a motto of the Gorky Colony, became

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<sup>40</sup> Gorky, Autobiography, 159.

<sup>41</sup> For this quotation I have used K. Judelson's translation, in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 88. See also GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 186 and APS, 149.

<sup>42</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 186, 187; see also Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 89, 90, and APS, 149, 150.



Makarenko's most important maxim: "The utmost expectations for the colonist together with the utmost respect for him."<sup>43</sup>

Three years before his death, Makarenko gratefully remembered that he found the elements of socialistic pedagogics, not yet seen in life, in Gorky's wisdom and warmth of feeling. Reminiscing about the time he had spent pondering Gorky's writings, Makarenko remarked that he did not take any notes or laid down any rules, he "simply looked and saw."<sup>44</sup>

Makarenko concluded that it was not all that difficult to help a human being if one approached him without pretense, and "quiet closely," and that tragedies only arose in life because "the fellow man" was missing. Makarenko believed that mankind had not analyzed the fullness of Gorky's creative wealth and that, when this was done, the depth and scope of his inquiry into man would amaze people. Makarenko believed that Gorky was the only great writer who had treated the theme of man at the time of man's liberation, at the time man took on a socialist character.<sup>45</sup> Makarenko touched on this theme when he wrote to Gorky, saying that he was the only person in the world literature who was able to say that man was something

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<sup>43</sup> Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 376.

<sup>44</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 187; see also Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 90, and APS, 150.

<sup>45</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 187, 192; see also Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 91, and APS, 150, 154.

beautiful. "Others have also tried to say this except that their human beings appeared like a . . . madman. It was only you who could bring man to unite his pride with the love for all mankind and with the shy respect before something higher."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 356-57. Makarenko was not the only person who commented on Gorky's love for, and understanding of, man. Nina Gourfinkel cites Gorky: "If there is anything on earth sacred and great, it is the incessant growth of man, precious even when it is hateful." Gourfinkel, Gorky, 91. Makarenko, in a letter to Gorky of March 14, 1927, wrote: "'There is nothing higher than man' became the colony's basic principle," in Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 369.

### Gorky's Friendship

In their writings Gorky and Makarenko gave testimony to their friendship as well as to the friendship between Gorky and the Gorky colonists.<sup>47</sup> In his Pedagogical Poem Makarenko described how the colonists had together started reading Gorky's works out loud. Gorky's books Childhood and My Apprenticeship fascinated the boys, as they listened in disbelief to Gorky's life story wondering whether Gorky was like them. This question moved the children and sparked feelings of kinship for Gorky. Makarenko observed that it was as if Gorky's life had become part of the colonists'

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<sup>47</sup> For Makarenko's testimony see GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 78-80; vol. 4, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 56-58, 137-140, and vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 242-43, 247. The English translation is The Road to Life vol. 1, 134-37, vol. 2, 98-103, 236-42, and vol. 3, 400-410. See also "Maksim Gor'kij in meinem Leben" [Maxim Gorky in My life] in GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 182-192 and "Maxim Gorki in Meinem Leben" in APS, 146-56. Its English translation is "Maxim Gorky's Part in my Life" in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 82-99. For Gorky's testimony see "Arbeitskolonien für Kinder," in Hillig, ed., Makarenko in Deutschland 1927-1967, 47-55, and its English translation "Across the Soviet Union" in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 103-116. See also "Briefwechsel mit Gorki" (Juli 1925 - Februar 1935) [Correspondence with Gorky. (July 1925 - February 1935)] in Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 339-406.

life providing a background for discussion and "a scale for the measurement of human values."<sup>48</sup>

Gorky's birthday, on March 26, became an annual spring festival, celebrated with speeches, banners, marches, a banquet, and a performance of The Lower Depths. The colonists treated this festival as a private family event and invited no guests.<sup>49</sup> Makarenko described that in the beginning the boys regarded Gorky with almost religious veneration. They found it hard to believe that the events described in My Childhood were true and that a talented person such as Gorky had to work hard and study. Makarenko noticed that Gorky, whose life resembled the life of so many colonists, slowly became "comprehensible" to them. They began to dream of Gorky's visit to the colony. They hoped that if they met Gorky they would become his friends. After a period of intense interest into Gorky's life, and into his friends, these emotions gave way to other feelings.

The image of Gorky in the colony's collective at last attained normal proportions, and it was only then that I began to observe, not awe before the great man, not the respect due to a great writer, but a real, pulsating love for Alexei Maximovich, and real gratitude on the part of the Gorkyites for this remote, a little mysterious, unusual and yet real human being.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 78-80, and The Road to Life, vol. 1. 134-36.

<sup>49</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 4, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 56-57, and The Road to Life, vol. 2, 98-103.

<sup>50</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 4, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 139. See also The Road to Life, vol. 2, 239.

When in 1925, Makarenko read in a newspaper that Gorky was living in Italy, he and the colonists seized the chance to write to him, addressing their first letter: Italia, Massimo Gorky. Surprisingly, Gorky received the letter, and he replied immediately. According to Makarenko, within a few weeks the letter had to be "read in holes."<sup>51</sup> This marked the beginning of a regular correspondence between Gorky and the colonists, which lasted three years, until July 1928, when Gorky returned to the Soviet Union and visited the Gorky Colony.<sup>52</sup>

In his Pedagogical Poem, Makarenko tells how preparations for Gorky's visit began the day the letter arrived announcing Gorky's visit.<sup>53</sup> On June 8, 1928, Makarenko replied to Gorky, "We live entirely under the sign of your arrival," and two weeks later, "We expect you, in these words lies our entire life."<sup>54</sup>

Makarenko noticed that the Gorkyites spoke about the forthcoming visit with "extreme tenderness," and that the brief announcement of Gorky's coming had given rise to "great eagerness." This observation was noteworthy because

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<sup>51</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 4, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 137. See also The Road to Life, vol. 2, 236-37.

<sup>52</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 188; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 92; APS, 151-152.

<sup>53</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 243; The Road to Life, vol. 3, 402.

<sup>54</sup> Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 379, 380.

Makarenko had found that the colonists were unable to express love, and concealed feelings of tenderness behind a mantle of austerity. Makarenko wrote:

I had lived with them for eight years, many of my charges grew very much attached to me, but not one of them during all this time was ever tender to me. I could only measure their feelings to me by tokens known to myself alone--the depth of a glance . . . a slight huskiness, joyous leaps after a chance encounter.<sup>55</sup>

Makarenko believed that only people like the colonists, who had been deprived in childhood, could realize the value of care and affection from someone like Gorky, "a man of rich and generous heart."<sup>56</sup>

The preparations for welcoming Gorky to what Makarenko called the greatest festivity in the colony's history were undertaken with solemnity and gentleness. Early in the morning, there began appearing motorcars, officials, and people from the press, photographers, film makers and townspeople. Obviously moved, Gorky, "this man with the eyes of a friend," greeted the colonists whose open hearts went out to him.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 242; The Road to Life, vol. 3, 401.

<sup>56</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 242; The Road to Life, vol. 3, 400-401.

<sup>57</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 247; The Road to Life, vol. 3, 409-10. The local and regional press had reported Gorky's visit and described his interest in the colony. For copies of press reports see G. Hillig and S. Weitz, eds., Makarenko Materialien IV: Ucrainica: A. S. Makarenko's pädagogische Tätigkeit im Spiegel der ukrainischen Presse (1924-1937) [Makarenko's pedagogical activities as mirrored in the Ukrainian press (1924-1937)]. Marburg: VVG

Gorky was a guest in the colony for three days, which he spent with the children, rising with them at six o'clock in the morning and visiting their work places. On one evening the colonists performed The Lower Depths.<sup>58</sup>

Gorky's first visit to the Colony at Kuryazh has been described by Gorky, by Makarenko, and by N. E. Fere, the colony's agronomist. Makarenko called the days of Gorky's visit the happiest in his life and in the life of the colonists.<sup>59</sup> In the evening, they had the opportunity to talk about pedagogical themes and educational topics.

I was very happy to note that all our collective's innovations met with Gorky's whole-hearted approval, including what my enemies referred to as the "militarization" of the colony . . . Gorky on the other hand had succeeded in observing in the space of a mere two days that it entailed a harmless element of play or make-believe and added an aesthetic touch to the children's daily work routine, which when all was said and done was a tough and relatively poor one. He

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Verlags-und Vertriebsgemeinschaft, 1982), pp. XIII, XV, 5, 33, 95, 103, 121, 122, 130, 132, 136, 141. Hereafter cited as Ucrainica. The announcement in the press of Gorky's visit to the Gorky Colony resulted in a film documentary about the colony. See Anatolij Frolov, "Filmdokumente über die Gor'kij-Kolonie und die Dzerzhinskij-Kommune." [Filmed documents about the Gorky Colony and the Dzerzhinski Commune], in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 111-112.

<sup>58</sup>Frolov, "Filmdokumente," in Hundert Jahre, 111-12; N. Fere, Makarenko, Mein Lehrer. [Makarenko, my teacher]. (Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1953), 130-145; Marburg Study Edition, 114. The Marburg editors Hillig and Weitz state that Makarenko stayed for two days in the Gorky Colony.

<sup>59</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 190; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 96; APS, 152.

realized that this element merely enhanced the children's life and he saw nothing regrettable in it.<sup>60</sup>

In his essay "Across the Soviet Union," Gorky

wrote:

I had been carrying on a correspondence with the young people for four years keeping track of how gradually their spelling and grammar improved, how their social awareness grew and their knowledge of the world around widened--in a word how young anarchists, tramps, thieves, and prostitutes were turning into upright working human beings.<sup>61</sup>

When Gorky visited the colony, he received a gift of 284 autobiographies written by the members. Some had written poems and Gorky recognized that most of them were "generously endowed by nature with talent." He was amazed at how much at ease he felt with the colonists, being one who normally found it difficult to talk to children. He observed an excellently developed sense of comradeship between the boys and girls and evidence of the girl's care, having filled the rooms with fragrant herbs, and greenery and gone out of their way to beautify and brighten the lives of the four hundred young people. Gorky wondered who could have transformed and re-educated hundreds of children who had been dealt such cruel blows by life?"<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>For this quotation I used the translation by K. Judelson, in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 96. See also GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 190, and APS, 152-53.

<sup>61</sup>Maxim Gorki, in Hillig, ed., Makarenko in Deutschland 1927-1967, 48; Maxim Gorky, in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 103.

<sup>62</sup>See Hillig, ed., Makarenko in Deutschland, pp. 50, 51, 52; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 109-112.



Gorky participated in a ceremony to herald the delivery of five rail trucks of crates, which the colonists had completed in their carpentry workshops. The colony's orchestra played and speeches were given on the great significance of work that alone creates culture. Gorky acknowledged that it was impossible for him not to be moved by the proud faces of the four-hundred colonists as they watched the crates being loaded onto carts. "Makarenko," he wrote, "is able to talk about work with a quiet, controlled strength that is more understandable and more eloquent than any fine phrases."<sup>63</sup> In his first letter to Makarenko, Gorky had stated that the colonists were living in a time of historic importance, one in which man was to follow the call of love for labor which is necessary to build a new, free and happy life on earth.<sup>64</sup> Gorky, who had written eloquently of the value of man's work wholeheartedly approved of the colonists' labor activities.

For me, there are no ideas beyond man; for me, man and only man is the creator of all things and all ideas, he is the miracle-worker and the future master of all the forces of nature. The most beautiful things in this our world are the things made by labor, made by skilled human hands, and all our thoughts, all our ideas, are born out of the process of labor, as shown by the whole history of the arts, science and technology.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>See Hillig, ed., Makarenko in Deutschland, 53; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 113-14.

<sup>64</sup> Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 343.

<sup>65</sup> Maxim Gorky, "How I became a Writer," cited by Nina Gourfinkel, Gorky, 184.

A description of Gorky's friendship with Makarenko and with the colonists would remain incomplete without mentioning the ten-year correspondence between Makarenko and Gorky that began on July 8, 1925 and ended on October 8, 1935.<sup>66</sup> This correspondence amply attests to the significant role Gorky played in the lives of the colonists, by his personal example, as a figure of compassion and one who shared their experiences as well as their love and kinship. These letters show Gorky's continued interest in and sincere admiration for Makarenko's educational work with the young lawbreakers and tramps and affirms his willingness to help support the colony however he could. This was despite Makarenko's protests that the colonists had to find strength in themselves to fight their battles. Gorky's encouragement of Makarenko's work and his undying confidence in Makarenko's educational methods and beliefs, particularly at a time when these methods were under increasing attack by the Ukrainian educational authorities, and above all, Gorky's understanding and sympathy for the "difficult task to be in charge of three hundred youth who do not care much for discipline and organized work," according to Makarenko multiplied his energy and trust tenfold.<sup>67</sup> The following

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<sup>66</sup>See Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 339-406.

<sup>67</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 356, 364, 370; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 189; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 94; APS, 152. See also G. Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 134. Hillig highlights a number of situations, in which Gorky actively supported Makarenko. This includes the planned move of the

letter cited in Makarenko's essay on Gorky, was particularly important to him as a teacher:

This earth is in truth our earth. It is we who have rendered it fertile, adorned it with towns, traversed its open spaces with roads, and wrought all imaginable marvels within it, we men, who once were nothing but futile particles of shapeless and mute matter . . . but who now are bold founders of a new life.

Keep in good health and show respect for one another, and do not forget that within every man there is concealed the wise strength of a builder, and that this strength must be given the freedom to unfold and bloom, so that it might enrich the earth with still greater wonders.<sup>68</sup>

In contemplating the influence that Gorky had on Makarenko's pedagogical work, it appears, that Makarenko, through his early acquaintance with Gorky's writings, had a unique affinity to Gorky's thinking, which made him particularly receptive to Gorky's values and beliefs. It was precisely Gorky's conception of Man to which Makarenko responded with such enthusiastic conviction, for he believed that Gorky's image of the human being would provide him with the basis on which he could build his educational principles. It is interesting to note, that Makarenko did not look for educational methods or new techniques which would guide him in his awesome task of re-educating young

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Gorky Colony to Zaporozhe (1925-26); the attacks against Makarenko because of the "Commander System" that Makarenko had developed in the Gorky Colony (1928); Makarenko's dismissal from the Gorky Colony (1928); Makarenko's attempts to leave the Dzerzhinsky Commune and move to Moscow (1933); and Makarenko's transfer to Kiev (1935).

<sup>68</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 189; see also Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 93, 94; Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 361; APS, 151.

bandits and criminals to become "the new Soviet man."

Makarenko had already found, that books and theories were of no use in his work with resisting young hooligans.

Makarenko was guided by Gorky's optimistic belief that in all men lives a potential good, a great beauty and a moral strength which the teacher, by committing himself to this belief, could foster in each pupil. This gave him the courage to proceed with the education of his charges, even in the face of conflict and moments of despondency. Gorky's influence went further, as Makarenko saw in him a trusted friend and ally (in fact as the only one amidst an army of critics) who understood his educational approaches and who confirmed their value.

Makarenko was able to translate Gorky's affirmative belief in the human good into some guiding principles which became the rock-bed of his educational system. He was able to meet his young anarchists in the same way in which he had met his uncorrupted and innocent students during the time when he was teaching in regular schools. He focused on the conduct of his students as it appeared in the immediate moment and ignored the past. He went so far as to refuse to look at the criminal records of his charges. Makarenko adhered to his conviction, which he owed to Gorky, that education was impossible without a central orientation toward human worth.

Gorky's optimistic and positive image of man helped Makarenko to mobilize his inner courage and enabled him to meet moments of crisis with confidence and respect for each individual colonist. This principle of drawing on moral courage and inner strength in times of conflict, when methods of outer force and confrontation would be the norm, is reminiscent of Mahatma Gandhi. A contemporary of Gorky, Gandhi forged his principles of non-violent resistance as a tool for social change in South Africa, just a few years before Makarenko began his work with delinquent youth.

### Gorky, Makarenko's Literary Mentor

Not only did Gorky greatly influence the development of Makarenko's pedagogical creed, he was also important to Makarenko's literary activities. This influence can be traced in the correspondence between Makarenko and Gorky and to Makarenko's essay, "Maxim Gorky's Part in My Life," where Gorky's interest in Makarenko's literary plans is clearly indicated.<sup>69</sup> According to Götz Hillig, one can today be sure that Makarenko's Pedagogical Poem and The March of the Year Thirty were published only because of Gorky's active support. Hillig also suggests, that one can nowadays assume that Makarenko's admission to the newly founded Union of Soviet Writers (1934), which occurred without Makarenko's personal application for membership, can be directly linked to Gorky.<sup>70</sup> The correspondence between Gorky and Makarenko and Makarenko's

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<sup>69</sup> "Briefwechsel mit Gorky: Juli 1925-Februar 1935." [Correspondence with Gorky: July 1925-February 1935] in Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 339-406; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 182-192; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 82-99; APS, 146-54.

<sup>70</sup>G. Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 134. Makarenko became a member of the Union of Soviet Writers on June 1, 1934. He read about this event in the Literaturnaia gazeta [The Literary Gazette].

essay on Gorky will thus be the basis for demonstrating Gorky's role in Makarenko's literary endeavors.

Makarenko always had a literary yearning, a drive to write, even after Gorky's discouraging response to his story "A Foolish Day," which he had sent him in 1915. Significant new findings related to Makarenko's literary activities were made by Siegfried Weitz.<sup>71</sup> It is interesting that throughout the entire correspondence, in spite of his urge to write, Makarenko at the same time feared rejection, particularly by Gorky, and doubted his capacities and talent. For example, Makarenko explained in a letter to Gorky (1933) that his urge to write was simply stronger than his will to restrain himself and his poor opinion of his own writing. In 1935, Makarenko dreamed of writing a "large, a very large work, a weighty book on Soviet education." He wrote to Gorky that he had, in the thirty years of his work, gathered uncountable thoughts, observations, intuitions which should not get lost. Makarenko also felt that current literature was not portraying young people in a truthful manner: "yet I know so well, how wonderful these young people are."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>See S. Weitz, "Die schöpferischen Jahre," in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 60-65. Weitz comments on Makarenko's literary activities in the early 1920s.

<sup>72</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 389, 403.

Before Gorky visited the Gorky Colony (1928), Makarenko had told him that he was writing the story of the Gorky Colony and that he planned to call his book pedagogicheskaja poema [Pedagogical Poem]. Makarenko wanted to dedicate the book to Gorky and expressed fear that it might be sent for examination to the Peoples' Commissariat of Education and that they "will tear the book up."<sup>73</sup> Gorky tactfully encouraged Makarenko in his new undertaking, and, after having seen the Gorky Colony, impressed on Makarenko:

Your educational experiment with its outstanding results is, I assure you, something of truly universal importance. . . . It is important, indeed imperative that you bring news of it to progressive teachers throughout the world. And the sooner, the better.<sup>74</sup>

After his visit to the colony, Gorky became very supportive of Makarenko's writing plans, suggesting where he could publish his book and advising him to include photos. One year later, in 1929, Makarenko told Gorky that his book was to consist of three parts and four years later, (October 1932) that part one, though completed, was "still lying at home." "Somehow it is frightful to expose one's soul with such openness to the public." Makarenko viewed part one of his "Poem" as a story that did not speak of success but rather portrayed the "extremely difficult fight" in the

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 382-83.

<sup>74</sup> N. Fere, "My Teacher," in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 163. Nikolai Eduardovich worked as an agronomist in the Gorky Colony and was one of Makarenko's closest helpers.



Gorky Colony and all its failures, including Makarenko's own.<sup>75</sup> In his essay "Maxim Gorky's Part in My Life," Makarenko expressed his fears somewhat differently by saying that he was afraid to place the book before Gorky for his verdict. He remembered Gorky's reaction to his story "A Foolish Day," and he did not want Gorky to think of him as an competent pedagogue turned into an unsuccessful writer.<sup>76</sup> This fear may have been dispelled when, in 1932, Makarenko received a letter from Gorky, congratulating him on a small book written in 1930, entitled The March of the Year Thirty, a collection of sketches devoted to the life of the Dzerzhinsky Commune.<sup>77</sup> Gorky commented on the book most favorably, remarking, "On each page one feels your love for the youngsters, your tireless care for them and your subtle understanding for the soul of the child."<sup>78</sup> In his enthusiastic response, Makarenko stated that Gorky's letter was the most important event of his life and that Gorky's judgement of his writing had overthrown Makarenko's ideas about his own capacities. Yet, in the same letter Makarenko

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<sup>75</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 383-384, 388.

<sup>76</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 191; see also Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 97, and APS, 153.

<sup>77</sup> GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 191; see also Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 58, 98, and APS, 153. Makarenko had written this small book and had sent it directly to the publisher, who did not publish it for two years. No notice was taken of this work. Makarenko assumed that the book was forgotten. He was therefore surprised and delighted to receive Gorky's letter.

<sup>78</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 388.

stated again, that part one of the Pedagogical Poem, the "closest to my heart," was still lying in his desk. "It contained too many truths, I have misgivings and fears."<sup>79</sup> Makarenko again insisted that in order to write well one needed time and talent. He believed that he had neither.

What followed was the immediate and forceful response from Gorky (January 30, 1933).

I have been hearing that you are beginning to tire and that you need a vacation. Actually, I myself should have noticed long ago that you need a rest since I am keeping a fatherly eye on you. For twelve years you have been working away and the results of your labors are quite priceless. No one knows what you have accomplished, and no one will ever know if you do not tell the story yourself. Your so wonderfully successful, immensely valuable pedagogical experiment has, in my opinion, world significance.<sup>80</sup>

In autumn of 1933, Makarenko finally brought the first part of his Pedagogical Poem to Gorky, who commented that he found the "Poem" very successful and that Makarenko had found a true, lively and sincere tone for the story. Gorky believed that the manuscript needed no essential corrections and that it should be published."<sup>81</sup>

Thanks to Gorky's support, part one of the Pedagogical Poem was first published in 1934 in an Almanac, God XVII, that Gorky edited. For Makarenko, the appearance

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 389.

<sup>80</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 390; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 58-59.

<sup>81</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 391-92.

of the Pedagogical Poem marked one of the "most important events in my life."<sup>82</sup>

Between March and September 1934, similar dynamics are visible in their letters: Gorky pressing Makarenko to write and Makarenko hesitating. Again, Gorky encouraged Makarenko to write part two of the "Poem," as part one had been a great success and everybody who had read it felt that the story should be continued. Gorky commanded: "I expect your manuscript."<sup>83</sup> Makarenko again hesitated, saying that part two of the Pedagogical Poem was more difficult for him, in fact, that he was afraid to write part two. Here he wanted to show how the developed collective was forcefully moving forward. "I cannot imagine that I can cope with this difficult task; to write about a complete collective without losing the individual and the distinct characteristics of that person."<sup>84</sup>

Makarenko completed part two of the Pedagogical Poem after another reminder from Gorky (July 1934), begging him urgently to complete this part. "It seems that you do not appreciate the importance of your work which justifies and confirms your methods in child education."<sup>85</sup> After Gorky had seen the manuscript, he made helpful comments and

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 392, 558.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 393-94.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 392.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 396.

advised Makarenko to omit the humorous tone, which he had approved of in part one, from part two as he felt it detracted from the historical importance of Makarenko's social experiment. He explained: "I fuss about because I am deeply convinced that the "Poem" is of utmost importance, that your educational methods are good and the experiment informative."<sup>86</sup>

In his reply to Gorky (September 1934), Makarenko, in a summarizing statement, gave an overview of his entire pedagogical creed. He outlined the progression of his creed and showed how it developed in the Gorky Colony. At the same time he mapped a plan, showing how he had attempted to express this development in the three parts of his Pedagogical Poem. Again, Makarenko made references to his inexperience and weakness and apologized that his writing contained many imperfections.<sup>87</sup>

The year 1935 saw the completion of the Pedagogical Poem and once more it was with a struggle. Although Makarenko started writing part three of the "Poem," he again delayed completing the manuscript. Instead, he wrote two plays, In Major Key and "The Rings of Newton," which Gorky thought of very good. And yet, Gorky scolded Makarenko, urging him to finish part three of his Pedagogical Poem before writing plays. Gorky reminded Makarenko that the

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 397.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 398-99.

Pedagogical Poem was much more important than his plays.<sup>88</sup>

Makarenko's reply once more confirmed his reticence to speak about his own life.

Thank you for scolding me. . . . The Pedagogical Poem is the poem of my entire life, which seems to me to be something "sacred" even when this is only faintly mirrored in my story.<sup>89</sup>

On September 28, 1935, Makarenko sent part three to Gorky, gratefully acknowledging the support he had given him in completing his large, difficult task.

Dear Alexej Maximowitsch! The huge and to me unfamiliar task, the Pedagogical Poem is completed. I do not know in what words and with what feelings I can thank you, for the entire book is solely and entirely the work of your great attention and love to mankind. Without your pressing and urging and your tremendous active help I would never have written this book.<sup>90</sup>

Gorky's last letter to Makarenko, written on October 8, 1935, includes a brief comment that Gorky was "devilishly moved" by part three of the "Poem." Gorky's last advice to Makarenko was in answer to a question that Makarenko had posed, expressing his concern at facing sudden emptiness as a writer and losing the skills he had gained in writing the Pedagogical Poem. Gorky advised him:

Keep a daily diary. Record particularly clear thoughts, facts of a poignant character and linguistic usages like a successful sentence, aphorisms and "bonmots." Write every day at least one dozen lines, but keep them short and succinct so that you can later turn them into two, three pages. Give your humor free

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 400, 401-02.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 402.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 404.

range. When you follow all this, you will not only retain, but enlarge and expand, what you have gained in working on your "Poem."<sup>91</sup>

To summarize the discussion of Gorky's influence on Makarenko, it appears clear that Gorky's influence was profound and extended over Makarenko's educational activities and over his work as a writer. Makarenko did not obtain any educational methods or techniques from Gorky, as he developed his pedagogical creed, nor did he find "recipes" in Gorky's novels, plays or stories. Methods and techniques he had to discover and develop himself. Gorky's influence on Makarenko's educational beliefs was indirect, for he provided Makarenko with a basic image of Man. This image held that the human being is inherently good. Makarenko developed his techniques, based on a solid trust in this image.

Gorky's influence on Makarenko's writing was also significant. This is certainly evident in the correspondence between Makarenko and Gorky which documents Gorky's continuing encouragement in Makarenko's writing of his Pedagogical Poem. Although Makarenko had spoken in lectures and reports of his pedagogical theories and practices, it is the Pedagogical Poem which has given the world knowledge of his educational work and of how he came to form his pedagogical creed. Without this account,

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 405.

Makarenko's now world-famous pedagogical experiments would have been forgotten.

Gorky was convinced that Makarenko's "wonderfully successful, immensely valuable pedagogical experiment had world significance."<sup>92</sup> The fact that Gorky is known to the world as a literary figure rather than as an educator should be considered in determining the extent, to which his beliefs should influence the evaluation of the applicability of Makarenko's educational ideas to a nontotalitarian society.

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<sup>92</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 390. Gorky made this statement in a letter to Makarenko dated January 30, 1933.

## CHAPTER V

### CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING MAKARENKO'S IDEAS AND PRACTICES

The author's evaluation of the universality of Makarenko's educational ideas and their application to non-soviet societies is based on Makarenko's pedagogical writings, which he produced mainly in reaction to criticisms from Soviet authorities and others. These controversies are important because they compelled Makarenko to define and articulate his pedagogical theories. Had he not been challenged, this record would most likely not exist, for Makarenko admitted that putting his educational ideas into words was an agony.

Makarenko wrote at great length about the pedagogical differences he encountered with the educational authorities, in particular with the Ukrainian People's Commissariat of Education. He devoted long passages and whole chapters to these controversies, pondering over the issues that had caused the conflicts, reflecting on his own pedagogical principles, or re-experiencing the painful events in which he encountered criticism and attack from his superiors. Often he interrupted the text to enter into a soliloquy defending his methods. One can see in



Makarenko's writings a distinct polemical trait that is fundamental to his thought. Interestingly, the Makarenko literature, written in Russian contains little regarding these controversies, apart from Makarenko's own words. The historical background of these conflicts is not fully known, and, in Makarenko's one-sided picture, his opponents appear anonymous and distorted.<sup>1</sup> Through the findings of the German researchers, at the Makarenko Department, who were able to draw on archival materials in the Soviet Union, some of the distortions could be corrected.<sup>2</sup> In what follows, their findings as well as Makarenko's own views of his critics will be examined.

To appreciate Makarenko's differences with certain pedagogical trends of his time, we shall review briefly the so-called "free" and "progressive" theories and assumptions of early Soviet pedagogues. It may then become clear why Makarenko encountered criticism and rejection of the educational ideas and principles that he had so laboriously hammered out in the "rough air of his colony."

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<sup>1</sup>Oskar Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit" [A. S. Makarenko and the pedagogy of his time], in Hillig und Weitz, eds., Wege der Forschung, 120.

<sup>2</sup>The Makarenko Department [Makarenko Referat], founded in 1968, is part of the Center for Comparative Education Research of the Philipps University, Marburg, Germany. Its aim is to research Makarenko's life, work, and his international reception. It is the only research center on Makarenko outside the USSR.

### Tenets of Early Soviet Education

During the first years of the Soviet regime, from 1918 to 1931, the Communist Party had not yet authorized a unified educational system and many different pedagogical interpretations existed side by side, all claiming to be Marxist.<sup>3</sup> The early period of Soviet education was dominated by theories of "social education," (sozialnoje wospitanije, abbreviated sozwoz) and pedology (pedologija), spearheaded by two of the most influential figures in early Soviet education, Paul P. Blonsky and Stanislav T. Shatsky.<sup>4</sup> To Blonsky, pedology meant "the science of the chronological development of the child under conditions of definite social-historical environment." Pinkevitch, a prominent Soviet educational leader, defined pedology as a "science. . . concerned with the psychological and physical development of the child from birth to maturity."<sup>5</sup> It was their ideas that brought Makarenko into a vitriolic and long-lasting conflict with his superiors and within leading Soviet

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<sup>3</sup>Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit," 135; Bereday et al., The Changing Soviet School, 57.

<sup>4</sup>Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit," 12.

<sup>5</sup>Bereday et al., 63.

pedagogues.

Deeply suspicious of prerevolutionary methods, early soviet educators "repudiated the major features of Tsarist education" and sought new principles that would best serve the goals and interest of the Bolsheviks.<sup>6</sup> According to Anweiler, essentially three major premises became the foundation of pedology and social education; formulated in more or less radical terms, these read: 1. The self-sufficient aim in education and training is the child and the child's free development which must not be curtailed in any way; 2. There is a harmony between individual and social aims that rests on man's "active altruism" and finds expression in the "solidary community," first of the children and later in the community of mankind. 3. The school has to reckon with the individuality of each child and must provide the possibility for the child's development. The school must not be seen as a preparation for life, for it is life itself, life for the children and for the youth who are members of human society.<sup>7</sup>

These principles applied also to the social rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents and law-breaking youth. Educational theorists were convinced that this group had to be educated "without force, punishment or scornful

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<sup>6</sup>Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit," 131.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 122.

treatment."<sup>8</sup> According to the theories of A. Zalkind, the leading authority in the field of social rehabilitation at that time, there had to be a "blending of a calm, pedagogical influence upon the pupil and the impulses which were arising from the social interaction of the students."<sup>9</sup> In Moscow, Zalkind had promoted as a model institution a labor colony for delinquent youth which was similar to Makarenko's colony. In his words, there existed "not one ready made rule, no directions from above; nothing should be forced upon the child, everything would develop by itself in the course of time."<sup>10</sup>

Blonsky's approach--he directed a "labor school" himself--was deliberately to put his students into an Urzustand (German for "primordial state of being") to awaken their drive for action, their urge for learning and their sense of community." In the Rousseau way, early Soviet pedagogues believed that the child would "naturally" develop into a communist person.<sup>11</sup> It may be worth pausing here to note a paradox that Makarenko had identified. Anweiler points out that these theories of "free education," with their belief in the spontaneous development of the child toward the good, had to "stand helplessly" before the

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 127-28.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 128.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 129, 137.

reality of young anarchists, who really needed an education "against" their own nature.<sup>12</sup>

In their reaction against the Tsarist and "bourgeois" features of education, early Soviet educators shaped their educational tenets after progressive Western educational leaders.<sup>13</sup> For example, the teacher, a "pedagogic dictator" in Tsarist days, was now replaced by a passive "older brother," who was to refrain from exerting any authoritative pressure on the child and "become first of all a genuine, well-rounded human being."<sup>14</sup> As to school discipline, all prerevolutionary practices were rejected. Nadezhda Krupskaya (Lenin's wife) was on the alert to prevent children's committees from degenerating, in the hands of teachers, into policing organs that would function like a militia to maintain control over students. As a result, the only rule that governed school discipline was a "declaration" that simply called for keeping children occupied. Krupskaya and like-minded Soviet educators believed that the children, through a partnership-like democratic process of self-organization, would become self-regulating and maintain order by exercising "conscious self-discipline." Any transgressions of order were addressed

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 128.

<sup>13</sup>Bereday et al., 51, 55-56.

<sup>14</sup>Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit," 129.

through "collective counsel" and "moral influence."<sup>15</sup>

Krupskaya spoke of any form of constraint as "a residue of slavery" and considered any use of force or coercion in the schools contrary to Marxist thought. Nor was there to be any punishment in the schools, for punishment was thought to be humiliating and injurious to the child's personality. Krupskaya strongly objected to the former penal practice of children's courts and to children "standing before a tribunal."<sup>16</sup>

Early Soviet educators also had devised a solution for resolving conflicts among individuals and the group which they called the "evolutionary way." Conflict resolution was to be guided by the gentle and careful manner of the educator.<sup>17</sup> Anatol Lunacharsky, in a "Declaration" of 1918, spoke to this issue:

The educating school . . . shall prepare for the future and shall, already at the school bench, endeavor to weld together firm collectives and, to the highest degree possible, develop the capacity for community experience and solidarity. Individualization shall not thereby be constricted. The personality can develop its natural tendencies in their fullness only in the harmony and solidarity of the communion of equals. . . . Socialist education unites the striving toward forming soul collectives with differentiated individualization, enabling the personality to experience pride in the development of all its faculties and pride in its

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 132.

service for the whole.<sup>18</sup>

As is known from Makarenko's writings, he was in bitter and direct confrontation with the current theories of pedology and with official educational policies that favored pedology. Anweiler points out that Makarenko used the term "pedology" polemically, so as to include every other pedagogical approach that placed the individual child at the center of the educational effort and interest.<sup>19</sup> Makarenko specifically opposed the following theories and practices of early Soviet educators: 1. rejection of the leadership role of the teacher; 2. reliance on the spontaneous development of the child toward the good, with minimal guidance from the teacher, and 3. prohibition of any form of disciplinary measures or punishment.

The following section will focus on Makarenko's view of the controversies surrounding his pedagogical ideas and practices.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 135.

### Makarenko's Views on Controversies

Although polemical remarks are inwoven in most of Makarenko's works, The Road to Life and his correspondence with Gorky most vividly portray Makarenko's views on his differences with Soviet educational authorities. In The Road to Life, (published in 1934, 1935, and 1936), particularly the chapters "At the Foot of Olympus" and "Help the Poor Little Boy," Makarenko relived with great intensity the painful experiences of his forced departure from the Gorky Colony in summer of 1928; much of his correspondence with Gorky occurred during this same period, when criticism over his methods began to mount. Challenged by opponents about his practices, Makarenko had to "apply himself to the agonizing task of putting into words the impressions, reflections, doubts and experiments" that he had accumulated over the years.<sup>20</sup> Lilge points out that Makarenko's philosophy of education became more sharply defined because of the necessity to justify himself before his critics and superiors.<sup>21</sup>

According to Makarenko, the hub of the controversy

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<sup>20</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 4, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 170; The Road to Life, vol. 2, 279.

<sup>21</sup>Lilge, A. S. Makarenko, 17.



was whether or not his educational methods conformed to soviet ideology. His opponents were the educational authorities who favored pedology. Here, Makarenko distinguished between the Gubernia (provincial or district) department of Public Education, under whose supervision he stood as long as the Gorky Colony was situated in Triby near Poltava, the period from 1920 to 1924, and the Narkompros (Ukrainian People's Commissariat for Education), situated in Kharkov, (center of the Ukrainian Soviet government), which monitored and inspected Makarenko's activities during the colony's stay at Trepke and Kuryazh, from 1925 to 1928.<sup>22</sup> Makarenko made it clear that the controversies evolved over time and that in the beginning of the Gorky Colony there was full agreement between him and the chief of the Gubernian Department of Public Education on how to educate the new Soviet man and find new methods for this task.<sup>23</sup> The initial criticism from the Gubernia Department of Education appeared, according to Makarenko, in spring of 1922, after he had lectured on discipline before a large congress of teachers.

Makarenko's lecture aroused "impassioned debates," because in it he had challenged the prevailing theory that punishment degraded the child and the teacher should rely on

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<sup>22</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 1; vol. 2, 18. Makarenko uses the term Narkompros throughout his correspondence with Gorky.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 2, 4.

the child's self-discipline and self-organization.

Makarenko advanced the idea that teachers were bound to use compulsion, particularly at a time when elementary work habits, customs and traditions had yet to be developed and forms of social life had still to be created. He also voiced doubt regarding the popular belief that education should be based on the child's interests, since these interests, in most cases, did not harmonize with group interests. Instead, Makarenko championed fostering the child's sense of duty. Finally, he called for creating a strong, spartan collective, and on this alone would he place his hopes. His lecture provoked intense disputation and verbal attacks. The Department of Public Education could not forgive Makarenko for what it termed his "barrack discipline." Critics denounced him, saying, "We'll finish off that police regime of yours, we need to build up social education, not to establish a torture chamber."<sup>24</sup>

Makarenko's insistence on a tightly organized, austere collective, with strict disciplinary measures remained the major cause for controversies and attacks on his educational ideas and practices.

When the Colony had moved from its first location in Triby to a second site, the former Trepke estate in Kovalevka, it came under the authority of the Ukrainian

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 195, 217, 218. See also GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 119, 132.

people's Commissariat for Education in Kharkov.<sup>25</sup> According to Makarenko, this administrative change brought with it a series of visits by inspectors and investigatory commissions who began to look closely at Makarenko's "methods." One inspector, whom Makarenko received as "he usually received inspectors, with the caution of a wolf accustomed to being hunted," had made a special journey from Kharkov to question Makarenko about his use of discipline and punishment. "They say there are . . . arrests . . . is it true that you put your charges on bread and water?" When Makarenko confirmed this to be true, saying, "I put them under arrest in my office," and admitted that sometimes a student went without dinner, he was told, regarding punishment and penalties, "all that is forbidden." After the inspector inquired into Makarenko's knowledge of pedagogy and, in disbelief, learned that he had "given up reading works on pedagogy three years ago" [the early 1920s] and that he was furthermore "extremely sorry for those who did read books on pedagogy," the inspector concluded that she had to "convert Makarenko to using Soviet pedagogics." Makarenko replied that the colony was using Soviet pedagogics, that in fact, "ours is communist education." He declared that he was going to continue doing what he thought necessary: "I don't know how to educate without punishment, I still have to learn that

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<sup>25</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 2, 18.

art."<sup>26</sup>

The next inspection, a three-person commission from Kharkov, consisted of an "insignificant individual," Sergei Vasilyevich Chaikin, (Makarenko had heard of him as a professor of pedagogics) and two women, one of whom, Varvara Victorovna Bregel, was the "highest authority" over Makarenko. According to Makarenko, the following dialogue took place:

"We've come specially to look into your methods," said Bregel.

"I protest categorically," I said. "There's no such thing as my method."

"What method do you use then?"

"The usual Soviet method."  
Bregel smiled sourly.

"It may be Soviet, but it certainly isn't a usual one. We must look into it, however."<sup>27</sup>

The inspectors also objected to several other of Makarenko's "theorems," including "a certain, as it were, competition" between the colonists, which was considered to be "grossly bourgeois," and Makarenko's practice of giving pocket money to the colonists. Was that not substituting "an inner stimulus" by a "grossly materialistic one?" Finally, the question of punishment came up again. "You must be aware that punishment breeds slaves, while what we want is a free personality, whose behavior shall be determined . . . by inner stimuli." Bregel's verdict was

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 242-45; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 4, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 142-43.

<sup>27</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 2, 278-79; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 4, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 169-170.

that Makarenko's methods were "awful."<sup>28</sup>

In May 1926, the Gorky Colony moved to Kuryazh. V. v. Bregel, who had come to inspect the activities of the colonists during the transfer, saw in the disciplinary behavior and in the orderly conduct of the colonists a "purely superficial" attempt to create an impression of order. When a colonist gave a bugle signal this was compared to "Commanders! Barracks!" Bregel's conclusion was that "its all very much like a military training school."<sup>29</sup> On another occasion, having found out that the People's Commissariat of Education referred to him as a gang ataman [Russian for a Cossack chief; hetman],<sup>30</sup> Makarenko commented that a critical eye was kept on the colony, "continually censuring" him, and reminding him that he ought to know "theory." He observed that the attitude of these official circles had grown hostile, if not contemptuous.<sup>31</sup>

The final rupture, the "ultimate, impassable gulf" between Makarenko and "them" [the Ukrainian People's Commissariat for Education] occurred when the colony had trouble with a colonist accused of theft. The boy was to

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<sup>28</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 2, 280, 281, 284; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 4, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 170-71, 173.

<sup>29</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 210, 231-34; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 124, 136-38.

<sup>30</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 351.

<sup>31</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 328, 358; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, vol. 1, 196, 217.

be tried by a "comrade's court," consisting of five elected "judges." Bregel, from the Commissariat for Education, made a special journey from Kharkov for the purpose of witnessing the trial. The judges passed their sentence, despite Bregel having delivered a speech in which she told the colonists they were to blame for the theft, since they had failed to give the boy the right help and support. As she left, "hissing," her final words were "You'll drive the boy to suicide."<sup>32</sup>

Early in May, just as the colony received news of Gorky's forthcoming visit, Makarenko was summoned by the People's Commissariat for Education to give an account of his educational activities. "I was required to tell all sorts of pedagogical pundits what my pedagogical faith consisted in, and what principles I professed." Makarenko remembered that he prepared for this meeting "cheerfully" though he did not expect any sympathy. In his words, the unanimous verdict of the Commissariat was that "the proposed system of educational process is a non-Soviet system." Makarenko recalled:

At last, in the high, spacious hall, I found myself faced by a veritable convocation of prophets and apostles. . . . Here, opinions were expressed courteously, wrapped in polite periods, redolent [aromatic] of cerebral convolutions, ancient tomes, and well-worn armchairs. . . . What right had they to wear haloes, and to bear the sacred scrolls in their hands?

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<sup>32</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 361-67, 372; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 219-222, 225.

professor Chaikin concluded the meeting:

Comrade Makarenko would like the process of education to be based upon the idea of duty. . . . We would advise Comrade Makarenko to make a thorough study of the historical sources of the idea of duty. It is an idea underlying bourgeois relations, an idea of a profoundly mercantile nature. Soviet pedagogics desires to cultivate in the personality the free manifestation of creative forces, inclinations, and initiative, but by no means the bourgeois idea of duty.

"It is with profound grief and astonishment that we have heard today . . . an appeal for the cultivation of the sense of honor. We cannot but declare our protest against this appeal. Soviet public opinion also joins its voice to that of science, is also unable to reconcile itself to a return to a conception so vividly reminiscent of officer's privileges, uniforms, epaulettes.<sup>33</sup>

Realizing that there was nothing to lose, "since all was already lost," Makarenko told the authorities that they were not fit to judge education for they knew nothing about the subject.<sup>34</sup> For him, the decision to leave the colony had already been made. In his letters to Gorky, written between February and June of 1928, Makarenko had indicated that he was getting tired of battles with the authorities and that attacks and criticism had increased because he had categorically refused to submit to the prejudices of a senseless system called pedagogy [pedology].<sup>35</sup> The next day, Makarenko handed in his resignation to Yuryev, an inspector

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<sup>33</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 402-403, 405; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 243-44, 245.

<sup>34</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 404-405; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 244.

<sup>35</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 371-374, 375-378.

from the Department of Public Education. Knowing of Gorky's visit in June, he decided to leave the colony "on the day of Gorky's departure."<sup>36</sup>

Makarenko frequently commented on the critical reception he received from the authorities and his bitter feelings toward his "enemies" fill many pages. "They bring you a wild and unruly youngster and expect that you turn him into a new person. I awaken his self confidence . . . I appeal to his honor as a human being and as a worker, but as it turns out all this is 'heresy.'"<sup>37</sup> Makarenko's hostility toward his opponents was fuelled by the conviction that the authorities and bureaucrats, the professors of pedology, were people of theory who lacked the pedagogical practice that he felt he had gained in many years of hands-on experience. In fact, he wrote to Gorky that he felt there was no educational system at all and that the pedagogues did not know what they were doing.<sup>38</sup> Makarenko called members of the official circles "Olympians," "prophets," and "apostles" who were sitting on "Olympus," far removed from the reality of daily life. In his Pedagogical Poem (The Road to Life) he wrote, "From those heights (the Olympian offices) nothing could be seen but the boundless ocean of

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<sup>36</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 406-407; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 245-46.

<sup>37</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 377.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 351.



childhood in the abstract." According to Makarenko, there, in the Olympian bureaus, was the model of an abstract child, "built of the most fragile materials--ideas, newsprint, and Manilovian dreams" [meaning utopian dreams].<sup>39</sup> Filled with bitterness, Makarenko often resorted to ridiculing his adversaries. Thus, for example, he wrote, "Up above, the 'child' was regarded as a creature filled with some gaseous substance for which no one had as yet found a name. . . . It was assumed . . . that this substance was capable of self-development, if only it was left alone."<sup>40</sup> Given awe and respect for nature, the substance was to "inevitably develop into a communist personality." However, Makarenko's own conclusion was that a child left to itself would simply develop like a common weed.<sup>41</sup> At another time, he stated that "Soviet pedagogy" was nothing but the irresponsible invention of the intelligentsia, who had no common sense and whose theories had already shipwrecked.<sup>42</sup> Makarenko repeated that in dealing with delinquents and young anarchists, one could no longer remain a bureaucrat but had to become a living human being, ready to take risks and even to make

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<sup>39</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 269; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 161.

<sup>40</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 264-65; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 158.

<sup>41</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 265; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 158.

<sup>42</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 189, 376.

mistakes. He concluded that his pedagogical scheme was the genuine Bolshevik scheme.<sup>43</sup>

With this conviction, Makarenko left the Gorky Colony, certain that the type of truly human being he had envisioned was not a dream but reality, a fact he could appreciate to the full, since the forming of human beings had become part of his daily work.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 375; The Road to Life, vol. 3. 386-87; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 234.

<sup>44</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 386-87; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 234.

### Findings of the Marburg Research

The Marburg researchers, by drawing on materials from several Soviet archives, have enlarged on, and, at times, corrected Makarenko's interpretation of the controversies over his educational ideas and methods. The published reports of the Marburger researchers, which will be used as the basis for this discussion, shed new light on Makarenko's relationship with the authorities, discipline and punishment in the Gorky Colony, and reasons for Makarenko's forced departure from the Gorky Colony.<sup>45</sup>

Makarenko's conflict with the Ukrainian Commissariat for Education and with other Soviet functionaries began to develop as late as 1927. Though the educational authorities soon became aware of his colony, Makarenko did not always, contrary to what he stated, have enemies among these circles. In fact, the authorities were glad for any organized and well-run colony, and Makarenko was, particularly in the 1920s, the subject of favorable attention and recipient of honors and of awards. Thus, in an official report of September 21, 1922, M. N. Kotel'nikov,

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<sup>45</sup>See the following publications: Marburg Study Edition; Pädagogik und Schule in Ost und West, cited as PSOW; Makarenko Materialien IV: Ucrainica.

inspector from the Department of Public Education, commented on the fact that the Gorky Colony had introduced a military system that the colonists much enjoyed and that had beneficial effects on maintaining discipline and order. Due to inspector Kotel'nikov's efforts, the Gorky Colony was pronounced an experimental and model institution.<sup>46</sup> When the colony celebrated its fifth anniversary on August 30, 1925, (an event announced in the local press), the Ukrainian People's Commissariat for Education conferred on Makarenko the honorary title "Red Hero of Labor" and the Poltava District Executive Committee honored Makarenko's work at the Gorky Colony by awarding him a sum of money plus a two-month educational visit to Moscow.<sup>47</sup>

As early as 1922, the Soviet press took notice of the Gorky Colony and began publishing reports about it. Over the years, numerous journalists from regional and national newspapers visited the colony, giving, in most cases, very positive descriptions of the various pedagogical elements considered typical of Makarenko's educational thinking. But it was not only journalists who reported on the Gorky Colony and made its name known both regionally and nationally. Soviet pedagogues also showed interest. Maro (M. I. Levitina) wrote a small book on Makarenko's work with young law breakers titled The M. Gorky Colony (1924), and in

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<sup>46</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 107-108.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 110; Ucrainica, 6.

1924 and 1925, M. Bykovek, inspector of the Ukrainian people's Commissariat for Education, wrote two very positive articles on the Gorky Colony and its educational program. Other articles followed. As a result of such favorable opinions by leading pedagogues, the Gorky Colony was widely considered to be a well-run educational institution, exemplary for its organized labor and for its pupils' self-government.<sup>48</sup>

The year 1926 saw the first criticisms of Makarenko's pedagogical ideas. Makarenko had participated at a conference for the workers at homes for children (January 1926), where he had called for a scientifically designed code of punishment to be developed by a commission of experts. This proposal did not go unnoticed. Following the conference, H. Vascenko, Professor and head of the Department for Pedagogy at the Institute for Social Education in Poltava (Ukraine), published a report (February 1926) of the conference in the central pedagogical journal of the Ukraine. The major part of his report centered on Makarenko's talk, which, according to Vascenko, contained several "dangerous symptoms" that could not be overlooked. He criticized Makarenko for using punishment as an educational tool, for disregarding the pedagogical literature, and for his refusal to acknowledge Soviet

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<sup>48</sup>G. Hillig, ed., "Introduction," Ucrainica, XIII-XVII; Maro (M. I. Levitina), in Wege der Forschung, 3-15.

pedagogy. Vascenko was most critical of Makarenko's demand for a punishment code and warned of the danger of such ideas, particularly since some conference participants had shown interest in Makarenko's thinking. He explained, that as soon as an institution begins to speak of discipline and punishment, it also signals problems.<sup>49</sup> Götz Hillig states that Vascenko's critical reception of Makarenko's pedagogical ideas, (in particular his demand for a punishment code), represented the first testimony against Makarenko's theories in contemporary Soviet literature and that this event could be seen as the first hint of conflict between Makarenko and the People's Commissariat for Education.<sup>50</sup>

Meanwhile, Makarenko was enjoying genuinely positive public attention. Articles praising the Gorky Colony continued to appear in the Ukrainian press and Makarenko received highly complimentary remarks from V. Djusen, a government official, for a lecture, "Organization of the Education of Problem Children," given at a conference of the Ukrainian Institutions for the Education of Defective

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<sup>49</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 110; Ucrainica, 21-25; G. Hillig, "Zur zeitgenössischen Aufnahme der pädagogischen Ideen A. S. Makarenkos" [Regarding the contemporary reception of A. S. Makarenko's pedagogical ideas], PSOW XXVII, 3, (1979): 69-73.

<sup>50</sup>Hillig, "Introduction," Ucrainica, XV-XVI.

Juveniles.<sup>51</sup> Feeling confident over the success of the Gorky Colony's educational methods, Makarenko felt the urge to extend his model to other colonies. In Spring of 1927, he prepared a project for merging all children's homes and colonies located in the district of Kharkov, proposing to consolidate them into one large "corps of working children." Makarenko found support from Galina Stachievna Salko (his later wife), who was head of the Commission for Juvenile Delinquency. The District Children's Aid sponsored the project and in fall of 1927 the majority of the Kharkov children's homes were reorganized according to the Gorky Colony system. Makarenko took on the administration of this new organization in addition to being in charge of the Gorky Colony. Hillig and Weitz suggest that the formation of this project and Makarenko's supervisory role in it contributed significantly to the approaching conflict over Makarenko's educational system.<sup>52</sup> They explain that the merging of children's homes came at a time of forced Ukrainization in all areas of public life within the Ukrainian SSR. The Gorky Colony was the only children's home in the entire district of Kharkov that had remained Russian. Makarenko's clinging to "Russian-dom" and his adherence to the Russian language, which had been restricted in favor of the Ukrainian language, was bound to lead to conflicts. The

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<sup>51</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 111.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 111-112.

project to merge the homes failed in the end, and Hillig suggests that this was due to mounting criticism over Makarenko's resistance to comply with the Ukrainization of the Ukrainian SSR.<sup>53</sup>

From that point on, there seems to have been "a turning of the tide." In fall of 1927, the Gorky Colony was accused of having used "means of physical action." This charge was made by an investigatory commission, initiated by the Kharkov Komsomol district-committee, which examined all children's homes, following reports of abusive treatment.<sup>54</sup> In November, Makarenko participated in an "All Russian Children's-Home Conference" in Moscow. There, the Gorky Colony was called "Arakeevian barracks," a reference to the much feared military colonies under Alexander I, and the Colony's system of self-government was called a "whipping system."<sup>55</sup> Three weeks later, on December 16, 1927, inspectors from the Kharkov District Office for Public Education held a special meeting regarding the "problems in the Gorky Colony."<sup>56</sup>

The final rift between Makarenko and the Ukrainian Commissariat for Education occurred in 1928, following a

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<sup>53</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 125.

<sup>54</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 112; G. Hillig, "Makarenkos Plädoyer für einen Heimleiter" [Makarenko's petition for the director of a children's home], PSOW XXVI, 4 (1978): 109-110.

<sup>55</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 112.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 112.



rapid sequence of events that placed Makarenko at the center of critical attention and public disapproval. A description of these events follows.

At the end of March 1928, N. F. Ostromenckaja, a former co-worker of Makarenko, wrote an extensive article on the Gorky Colony that appeared in a Moscow journal, which was the organ for the Central Committee of the Labor Union for Educators.<sup>57</sup> In retrospect, it appears that this article set into motion a series of interlocking events that became damaging to Makarenko, to his educational ideas, and to the Gorky Colony. The Soviet scholars L. J. Gordin and A. A. Frolov explain that Ostromenckaja had acquainted Makarenko with the text of her article beforehand and that he had approved it. She ignored certain of his comments, which led to misinterpretation of parts of the text. The author had, for example, maintained that the Gorky Colony used corporal punishment, although Makarenko was decidedly against such measures.<sup>58</sup>

Shortly after publication of Ostromenckaja's article, the Gorky Colony and the Children's Organization of the District of Kharkov, which had used Makarenko's educational model since 1927, were requested to abandon Makarenko's "system of commanders" in lieu of a system of

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 113; see also Makarenko's letter to Gorky from 18 April, 1928, in Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 377.

<sup>58</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 557.

pupil self-government that was endorsed by the District Executive Committee.<sup>59</sup> As a result of this attention by the press, Makarenko and the Gorky Colony became subjects of another article, which appeared in a Leningrad journal in April 1928. In a published commentary on Ostromenckaja's article, the influential pedagogical scientist P. G. Belskij focussed one-sidedly on her text and criticized the Gorky Colony for, amongst other things, its children's court, its use of punishment (including physical punishment), and its inadequate application of pedology.<sup>60</sup>

On the heels of Belskij's critique followed an article by A. V. Zalkind, a well-known pedologist, which was to have special significance for Makarenko's destiny as the director of the Gorky Colony.<sup>61</sup> Zalkind, focussing on the defects of the Kharkov Children's Homes, accused the Gorky Colony of the most brutal encroachments, for which he blamed the "commander system," (a system of pupil self-government used in the Gorky Colony). He called the commander system "harmful" and "contradictory to the principles of Soviet Pedagogy." He also held the commander system responsible for the absence of a Pioneer organization in the Gorky

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<sup>59</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 113; Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 133.

<sup>60</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 113.

<sup>61</sup>Hillig, "Introduction," Ucrainica, p. XVI.

Colony.<sup>62</sup> Around the same time (June 27), the People's Commissariat for Worker's and Peasant's Inspection referring in a newspaper article to the recent inspection of children homes by the Komsomol commission, reported that the Gorky Colony, in particular, had presented a "terrifying" picture of its educational methods and that the director, Anton Makarenko, had been dismissed.<sup>63</sup>

At the same time, on May 8, 1928, during the eighth Congress of the Komsomol, N. K. Krupskaya gave a speech on "The Activities of the Komsomol Among Children," in which she made explicit reference to Ostromenckaja's article on the Gorky Colony and condemned most sharply the colony's system of punishment, saying, "This is not only a bourgeois school, this is a school for slaves, a school for serfs."<sup>64</sup> This weighty condemnation of Makarenko's educational methods and practices was published on May 17, 1928 in Komsomol'skaia pravda (Komsomol Pravda).

Whether in response to Krupskaya's criticism or not, twelve days after her speech appeared in the press, the Ukrainian Central Bureau of the Communist Children's Movement, in a resolution, demanded reorganization of the Gorky Colony, and a halt to its damaging influence on other

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<sup>62</sup>A. Zalkind, "Von denen, die noch gestern auf der Strasse waren" [About those who, until yesterday, were still on the street], Ucrainica, 110-114.

<sup>63</sup>Hillig, "Introduction," Ucrainica, XVII.

<sup>64</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 114.

homes of the Children's Organization.<sup>65</sup>

Promptly thereafter, on July 11, V. A. Arnautov, head of the Department of Social Education of the Ukrainian People's Commissariat of Education arrived at the Gorky Colony for an inspection. He gave Makarenko an ultimatum: either discontinue his "commander pedagogy" or face dismissal. Two days later, on July 13, at a meeting of the Central Bureau of the Ukrainian Communist Children's Movement, a request was made to abolish the "system of the comrade Makarenko" step by step and appoint a Party member to be in charge of the Gorky Colony.<sup>66</sup>

The final step was taken by Makarenko himself. In the middle of July, 1928, he wrote to Arnautov, presenting him with the main principles of his "Variation of a Children's Organization" and informing him of his decision to leave the Gorky Colony. On September 3, 1928, eight years after having assumed charge of the Gorky Colony, [September 20, 1920], Makarenko was formally relieved of his functions as director of the Gorky Colony.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 114.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 114-115.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 115.

### Changes in the 1930s

Since the beginning of the 1930s, a new phase in Soviet educational history has evolved, which has brought Makarenko's thinking into closer alignment with the general direction of communist educational policy. Already in 1929, when A. S. Bubnov, former commander of the political administration of the Red Army became the new People's Commissioner for Public Education, military training was introduced into the Soviet schools.<sup>68</sup> Enormous economic upheavals, (industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture), as much as Stalin's political autocracy and the sharpening of Party control on ideology, created a political climate that directly affected education.<sup>69</sup> Growing dissatisfaction with experimental methods of the 1920s caused the Central Committee of the Communist Party to introduce a series of resolutions that would shake off all progressive practices. After the decree of September 5, 1931, which inaugurated a new period in Soviet education, Makarenko no longer had to swim against the tide. In this

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<sup>68</sup>Bereday et al., 60; Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit," 140.

<sup>69</sup>Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit," 140; see also Anweiler und Meyer, Die Sowjetische Bildungspolitik, 33-34.

decree, schools were mandated to apply more formal methods of instruction and impart "systematic knowledge of the subjects of the curriculum."<sup>70</sup> Another decree, that of August 25, 1932, restored the leadership role of the teacher and school discipline was once again enforced. Bubnov issued an order to all regional educational commissars to re-establish discipline in the schools since "without planned discipline . . . there will never be a real Soviet education."<sup>71</sup>

For Makarenko, the most important change came on July 4, 1936, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party passed an official decree abolishing pedology. Pedological theories and practices such as psychological testing were condemned.<sup>72</sup> Makarenko called the public announcement of this decision his "luckiest day" and expressed his triumphant feelings in these words:

Only the outrageous disregard of the People's Commissariat for Education regarding the right development of the education for our future generations, as well as the ignorance of leading officials can account for the fact that pedagogy was treated with contempt. . . . The fact that the vast and diverse experience of a whole army of school practitioners has not been utilized . . . can only be explained by the narrow-minded neglect of Soviet

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<sup>70</sup>Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit," 140; Anweiler und Meyer, Die Sowjetische Bildungspolitik, 178; Bereday et al., 72.

<sup>71</sup>Bereday et al, 71.

<sup>72</sup>Bereday et al., 72; Anweiler und Meyer, Die Sowjetische Bildungspolitik, 227.

pedagogical science. The Central Committee is of the opinion, that the so-called pedology is based on. . . pseudo-scientific, anti-marxist views.<sup>73</sup>

Anweiler points out that Makarenko's mockery, which can be found in his speeches and articles composed after 1936, reveals the belated exultation of the former outsider. Makarenko's emphasis on military practices, on organization and order, as well as his stress on discipline were now confirmed by changing Soviet educational policies. For Makarenko this implied that his pedagogy was now acknowledged to be "true Soviet pedagogy."<sup>74</sup>

After Makarenko left the Gorky Colony in July 1928 he encountered controversies of a new kind. These will be the subject of the next section.

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<sup>73</sup>A. S. Makarenko, cited in Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit," 141.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 142, 140; Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 125.

### Conflicts in the Dzerzhinsky Commune

In the Dzerzhinsky Commune I had no other choice but to adapt myself to the different currents emanating from my superiors or to fight against them.<sup>75</sup>

It may come as a surprise for those familiar with the Soviet literature on Makarenko to learn that he encountered conflicts in the Dzerzhinsky Commune, for Makarenko himself spoke highly of the commune's founders, the "Cheka-men" ("Secret police" or OGPU).<sup>76</sup> In his essay "Maxim Gorky in My Life," Makarenko described how, after his forced departure from the Gorky Colony, the Cheka-men had rescued his "homeless pedagogy" and given it the possibility

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<sup>75</sup>G. Hillig and S. Weitz, "A. S. Makarenko--Leiter der Dzer'zinskij-Kommune in Char'kov?" [A. S. Makarenko--director of the Dzerzhinsky Commune in Kharkov?], Paedagogica Historica X, 3 (1970), 463. Hereafter cited as "Leiter der Dzer'zinskij-Kommune?"

<sup>76</sup>James Bowen comments that "it is odd that Makarenko should use the term 'Cheka.' This was the name given the original 'Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage' created on December 20, 1917. It was abolished by a decree dated February 6, 1922, and replaced by the GPU until the OGPU was established on July 6, 1923. The term 'Cheka' was anachronistic at the time that Makarenko was writing and its use is probably due either to the fact that the old name lingered, or that 'Cheka' is easier on the ear than 'Ogpu.'" Bowen, Soviet Education, 218.



of full development.<sup>77</sup> Then, in The Road to Life Makarenko spoke eloquently of his warm and friendly relations with Cheka-men, whom he greatly admired for their unlimited capacity for work, their sense of common perspectives, their awareness of each other, and their consciousness of a common goal.<sup>78</sup> Makarenko's biographers further, in Hillig's words, "clung to the legend," that he was the director of the Dzerzhinsky Commune until 1935, when he became head of the new Department of Labor Colonies in the Ukrainian NKVD in Kiev, and that he developed an impressive industry in which the commune members were manufacturing cameras and electric drills.<sup>79</sup> The Marburg researchers Hillig and Weitz, by gathering materials from Soviet archives and analyzing reports from contemporaries, found that Makarenko had serious conflicts with the Cheka-men, that his function as the director of the Commune became very restricted, and that he undertook repeatedly to leave the Dzerzhinsky Commune. They found that Makarenko tried to return to literary activities and to take on directorships of other children homes. In fact, they suggested that in the Dzerzhinsky Commune the circle of Makarenko's opponents shifted from the

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<sup>77</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 191; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 97; APS, 153; G. Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 133.

<sup>78</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 232-34; The Road to Life, vol. 3, 383-86.

<sup>79</sup>G. Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 133.

Ukrainian People's Commissariat for Education to the OGPU.<sup>80</sup> Their published findings will be the basis for this discussion.

Makarenko's conflict with the board of governors in the Dzerzhinsky Commune was no longer one over official educational policy, as had been the case in the Gorky Colony; rather, it centered around whether the Dzerzhinsky Commune would remain a labor colony for delinquent children and youth, with its principle aim to provide communards with a general, all-around education--in other words, combining a children's labor commune with the school, as Makarenko had proposed before he joined the Dzerzhinsky Commune--or be converted into an industrial center, serving primarily political and economic interests and employing outside workers, which was the preference of the board of governors. In the following, some of the developments leading up to Makarenko's controversies with his superiors will be highlighted.

During the organizational period of the Dzerzhinsky Commune (1928-1929), Makarenko, in his role as director, modelled the Commune's life after that of the Gorky Colony. The students worked daily for four hours, at farming or in primitively established workshops, such as carpentry, shoe-making, and locksmith work. The second shift, also lasting

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<sup>80</sup>Hillig and Weitz, "Leiter der Dzer'zinskij-Kommune," 460, 463.

four hours, was spent in the Commune's general-education labor school, a seven-year school.<sup>81</sup> Soon, however, Makarenko began to feel restricted in his functions and most uneasy following the board of governors' appointment (September 1929) of P. O. Barbarov as both political instructor and as Makarenko's deputy. This step was taken after the Komsomol activities in the Commune had "fallen asleep."<sup>82</sup> Around the same time, in December 1927, a production manager, S.B. Kogan, was appointed. Supported by the board of governors, and left largely to himself, Kogan began to expand the production of the Commune on an enormously diversified scale. Makarenko, according to reports from contemporaries, felt concerned about the economic sector prevailing over the educational work. The production of small commodities and consumer goods geared to the demands of the local market absorbed the energies of the communards without meeting their true interests. Makarenko feared that this intensity in production threatened to alienate the Commune from its intended educational task, namely, to provide with its members a good, general education. Makarenko captured this situation memorably (in FD-1):

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 460, 467-68.

<sup>82</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 115; Hillig and Weitz, "Leiter der Dzer'zinskij-Kommune?" 474, 469, n. 87. As of January 1, 1929, thirty-two communards had been organized in the Komsomol [League of Young Communists].

In the evening, the communards would sometimes come to my office to chat and to laugh. At this hour, all their anger and frustration had blown over. Without end, they would make fun over the production of Solomon Borissowitch [Kogan] by saying, "Is it not strange: this is no production, this is rubbish, a heap of any old trash, and yet, a lot of it is constantly shipped to the city." . . . The elemental force of Solomon Borissowitch streamed incessantly into the commune, gaining ground over an ever-increasing territory, already advancing to the front steps, flooding the flowerbeds with trash and worthless materials.<sup>83</sup>

At the end of 1930 an event occurred that Makarenko called "tragic." It would mark the beginning of a series of events that were to have grave consequences on Makarenko's position in the Dzerzhinsky Commune and lead to serious controversies between Makarenko and the board of governors. On October 16, 1930, the board of governors abolished the posts of the vospitateli ("educators" or "upbringers"). Makarenko, years later, remembering the dismissal of the last educator, stated that he had feared he would "crash into an abyss" without the support of these people.<sup>84</sup> The confrontations between Makarenko and the board of governors climaxed during the winter of 1930/31. In response to the commune's annual report, written by the board's secretary, Makarenko was criticized for underestimating the Komsomol's activities in the Commune and of ignoring their work. According to the report, Makarenko had even expressed

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<sup>83</sup>Hillig and Weitz, "Leiter der Dzer'zinskij-Kommune," 471-73; A. S. Makarenko, Werke, vol. II, 224-25.

<sup>84</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 116; Hillig and Weitz, "Leiter der Dzer'zinskij-Kommune?" 470-71.

ridicule of the Komsomol. Because of its arbitrary and senseless character, Kogan's production work was to come to an end.<sup>85</sup>

As a result, the Communes's board of governors passed a resolution that would fundamentally reorganize the entire production process, strengthen the Commune's links with the OGPU, and stop Makarenko from making any decisions of principle without the board's approval. When Makarenko took the communards on a summer trip to the Caucasus between July 14 and September 17, 1931, without warning he was divested of his function as director of the Dzerzhinsky Commune and replaced by a new director, a Party and an OGPU member, to whom Makarenko was to be accountable. Eventually, Makarenko was appointed head of the educational section.<sup>86</sup> His reaction to this demotion was to withdraw from the Commune. In Spring of 1932, he went to Moscow for several months, most likely to take refuge in literary work.<sup>87</sup>

Little is known about Makarenko's activities in his new post except that he was in charge of the Commune's

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<sup>85</sup>Hillig and Weitz, "Leiter der Dzer'zinskij-Kommune?" 474-75.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 475, 478, 476; Marburg Study Edition, 117. For a detailed account of the conversion of the Dzerzhinsky Commune into an industrial complex see Hillig and Weitz, "Leiter der Dzer'zinskij-Kommune?" 476-477; Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 133.

<sup>87</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 118; Hillig and Weitz, "Leiter der Dzer'zinskij-Kommune?" 462, 481.

educational facilities, which included the Rabfak ("worker's faculty"), a technical school, and a seven-year school, together comprising a ten-year program.<sup>88</sup> Functions related to the communards were limited. He might, for example, be informed of rewards given a student, or of disciplinary measures taken. Hillig and Weitz, by a careful analysis of Makarenko's writings of the 1930s, point out that, in this position as head of the pedagogical section, Makarenko adhered unswervingly to two pedagogical goals: the general, all-around education and self-government of the communards.<sup>89</sup> Early in his work at the Dzerzhinsky commune his advocacy for the school as an educational tool had brought him into conflict with the board of governors, who demanded that workshop activities be given priority over schoolwork and instruction. Whereas some board members had insisted on six hours of workshop activities and two hours of school, Makarenko called for six hours of schoolwork and two hours of workshop.<sup>90</sup> Possibly in response to the board's forced and one-sided attention to producing goods, Makarenko wrote to one of its members (1932), "Only the collective's work on itself, only school and learning can bring us forward. The factory is merely a place for general activities [on]

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<sup>88</sup>Hillig and Weitz, "Leiter der Dzer'zinskij-Kommune?" 497.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 502.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 502, n.220.

the collective."<sup>91</sup> In another letter, Makarenko wrote:

The assertion that education is not needed whatsoever, that only work in production is educational, is one of those crazy ideas of which the pedagogical amateurism is brimming. . . . Can you tell me who really needed those thousand electric drills that required the introduction of a twelve-hour working day, destroyed the organization of the communards, brought to a halt all reading and other cultural activities, turned night into day and drove some directly into tuberculosis.<sup>92</sup>

Based on the ten-year school system of the Dzerzhinsky Commune, (at a time when the Soviet Union was still struggling for the realization of a seven-year school), Makarenko came to the conclusion that "the re-education, a true, total re-education, which protected from relapses, was only possible through the ten-year school."<sup>93</sup>

The other fundamental principle, that Makarenko clung to was the self-government of the communards, which he had developed in the Gorky Colony and transferred to the Dzerzhinsky Commune. It is evident that Makarenko at the time of his demotion found support from the collective of communards, which, as he wrote, became "an eminently creative and experienced, strong and precise force."<sup>94</sup> In a letter to the chairman of the Ukrainian OGPU (Spring 1934), Makarenko wrote, "As we view the Commune first and foremost as an educational institution, we hold the collective of the

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 502.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 502-503, n.222.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 503.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 505.

communards as the object of our attention."<sup>95</sup>

These two aforementioned educational principles were vigorously reaffirmed by Makarenko in an article commemorating the fifth anniversary of the Dzerzhinsky Commune.<sup>96</sup> A. A. Frolov called this article "especially important among Makarenko's creative works" as it brilliantly formulates his pedagogical principles.<sup>97</sup> In it Makarenko restated the importance of educating a cultivated Soviet worker and providing him with a (possibly) ten-year schooling and first-class vocational training, so that he would learn to make the interests of society his own personal interests.<sup>98</sup>

Ironically, immediately following the publication of this article, a meeting of the Ukrainian People's Commissariat for Education took place to discuss the work of Makarenko in the Dzerzhinsky Commune. M. O. Skrypnyk, the People's Commissar for Education since 1927, who was familiar with the controversies that had surrounded

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 505.

<sup>96</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 119. This article was entitled "Pädagogen zucken die Achseln" [Pedagogues shrug their shoulders. ]

<sup>97</sup>A. A. Frolov, "The Development of A. S. Makarenko's Pedagogical Views During the Active Period of the F. E. Dzerzhinski Commune." Soviet Education XX, (October 1978), 55.

<sup>98</sup>A. S. Makarenko, "Pädagogen zucken die Achseln," in Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 216-17 and Werke, vol. II, 439-441.



Makarenko in the late 1920s, gave a detailed account of his article, arguing that Makarenko's ideas contradicted the general tenets of Soviet education and political life."

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<sup>99</sup>Marburg Study Edition, 119; Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 134; Hillig, "Introduction," Ucrainica, XIX; M. O. Skrypnyk, "Das Rüstzeug für die Dzerzinskijer" [The equipment for the Dzerzhinskyites," Ucrainica, 228.

### Posthumous Glorification

From beginning to end, Makarenko was regarded with adulation, suspicion and horror, and in posterity the neatly balanced academic view can be the most misleading. Since his fatal heart attack on a suburban Moscow train in 1939 at the age of 51, he has been enshrined as Soviet Cultural Hero, one of an unlikely Trinity of Great Russian-Soviet Pedagogues along with Lenin's wife, Krupskaya, and Ushinsky.<sup>100</sup>

Neither Makarenko nor his educational ideas was acclaimed during his lifetime. Only after his death did his education within a collective receive official recognition and his pedagogical model become the authoritative Soviet system.<sup>101</sup> Urie Bronfenbrenner contends that Makarenko's techniques of collective upbringing are currently employed in all Soviet nurseries, schools, camps, children's institutions, and youth programs.<sup>102</sup> In the years since his death, Makarenko has been glorified in Soviet educational literature as the founder of Soviet pedagogy, the pioneer of socialist pedagogy, and the single most significant person

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<sup>100</sup>Alston, "Watch on the Elbe," 51-52.

<sup>101</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 123.

<sup>102</sup>Urie Bronfenbrenner, Two Worlds of Childhood: U.S. and U.S.S.R. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970), 5.

in Soviet education.<sup>103</sup>

In the process of stylizing Makarenko as the great soviet pioneer of pedagogy, relevant pedagogical texts were "canonized." Any comments critical of the Soviet Union or its pedagogy were excised, editorially altered, or "smoothed" out.<sup>104</sup> Froese, reflecting on the paradox of posthumously transforming the former outspoken opponent of Soviet education into its founder, noted that after Makarenko's death any pedagogical theory that did not make explicit reference to him was considered "un-Soviet." One went so far as to equal the disregard of Makarenko's theories with hostility toward Soviet education.<sup>105</sup>

John Dunstan concluded that the reason it took so long for Makarenko to win universal acclaim and eventually stand above other contemporary innovators is that a "detailed enquiry was needed into the process whereby Makarenko's position was consolidated after his death."<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>Leonhard Froese, "Die Sowjetsozialistische Pädagogik A. S. Makarenkos" [Makarenko's Sovietsocialist pedagogy], in Wege der Forschung, 323; Froese, Triebkräfte, 258, 262.

<sup>104</sup>Götz Hillig, "Unterdrückte Passagen aus Vorträgen A. S. Makarenkos (1938-1939)" [Suppressed passages from lectures by Makarenko (1938-1939)], PSOW, XXVIII, 2 (1980): 43-52.

<sup>105</sup>Froese, Triebkräfte, 259.

<sup>106</sup>Dunstan, "Demythologizing Makarenko," 32. See also Götz Hillig und Marianne Krüger-Potratz, "Die 'zweite Geburt' des A. S. Makarenko" [The 'second birth' of A. S. Makarenko], in Bernhard Dilger, Friedrich Kuebart and Hans-Peter Schäfer, eds. Vergleichende Bildungsforschung. DDR, Osteuropa und interkulturelle Perspektiven [Comparative educational research: DDR, Eastern Europe and intercultural

The following events trace some of the process that led to Makarenko's fame and glorification as the outstanding soviet pedagogue. On March 29, 1940, almost one year after Makarenko's death, a directive of the Party Central Committee commemorated his services to Soviet education and commended his ideas on collective discipline to all Soviet educators. In summer of 1940, Pravda and Ucitel'skaja gazeta ("Teachers' Gazette"), instigated at the behest of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, engaged Soviet educators and others in public discussions on Makarenko's pedagogical legacy. The following year, a Pravda editorial granted Makarenko the title "Great Soviet Pedagogue."<sup>107</sup> One article from this exchange (published in Pravda August 27, 1940) merits particular attention, because it endorsed the very educational principles and practices that Makarenko had employed, and which, in the 1920s, had caused intense controversies.<sup>108</sup>

Dunstan has suggested that this article, entitled, "A Discussion on Soviet Pedagogy," by M. Manuil'skij may be

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perspectives]. (Berlin: Berlin Verlag Arno Spitz, 1986), 308-347. According to the authors, this article is a contribution to an "almost unknown" chapter in the history of Soviet education.

<sup>107</sup>Lilge, A. S. Makarenko, 1; Alston, "Landmarks in the Literature: Super Soviet Pedagogue," 32.

<sup>108</sup>M. Manuil'skij, "Eine Diskussion Über Die Sowjetische Pädagogik" [A discussion on Soviet pedagogy], in Hilbig und Weitz, eds Wege der Forschung, 522-528; Froese, Triebkräfte, 258.

important in understanding the renewed interest in Makarenko's educational ideas and his sudden rise to prominence.<sup>109</sup> Manuil'skij reported on the comments of a professor of the University of Leningrad who summarized the prevailing pedagogical beliefs, which held that children should be approached with great tenderness and with gentle appeals to their conscience, as strictness and coercion were harmful. The report went on to say that such widespread, and up to then popular, beliefs were meeting fierce resistance from the best Soviet pedagogues, who felt the necessity of new strategies if their goal to raise the future builders of Communism were to be met. These educators shared their belief that honesty, sincerity, and devotion had to be transmitted to future generations of students if they were to be prepared for service to the people and the fatherland. This meant that their courage and willpower would have to be strengthened so they could fearlessly overcome all hindrances. The educators wanted to teach each child to become a skillful worker, one who in noble and selfless service would support the rules of life in a socialistic society and work for the benefit of that society.

In pursuit of these educational goals educators looked anew at the pedagogical principles of Makarenko, particularly his notion of collective upbringing. Among the

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<sup>109</sup>Dunstan, "Demythologizing Makarenko," 32, n.37.

pedagogues and participants in the discussion a suggestion was made that the schools apply "a series of methods that were based on Makarenko's experiences." This was to include the organizing of student and staff collectives, forming student self-government, responding immediately to troublemakers, and developing a clearly thought-out system of punishment.

Manuil'skiy clarified that the idea of punishment had always evoked immense horror among the representatives of social education, but that precisely the lack of punishment had resulted in rowdiness and disorder in the schools.

Our party and government have created an iron discipline in the factories . . . and turn to idlers, loafers, and disturbers of production, demanding strict work discipline. In return, the schools have so far not taught discipline to our children. It is precisely the young worker who makes up for the majority of sluggards in the factories. It would be curious if in this great task of educating for discipline, our schools would be lagging behind.<sup>110</sup>

Participants in this discussion concluded they had best attend to the task at hand without further delay, which meant demanding more of students and organizing a children's collective. They decided it was time to draw on the experiences of the finest Soviet pedagogues and put Soviet education on firm ground.<sup>111</sup>

This article was quickly followed by a similar

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<sup>110</sup>Manuil'skiy, "Eine Diskussion," 527.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 527.

report, called "A. S. Makarenko--An Outstanding Soviet pedagogue" by B. B. Komarovskij, which was published in sovetskaia pedagogica (Soviet pedagogy). The author criticized pedology and the concept of "free education" (meaning education without discipline) and appealed to Makarenko's pedagogical principles, the importance of collective education, student self-government, discipline, and the role of labor in education.<sup>112</sup>

To better understand the impact such discussions had on the reading public, we need to consider the role of the Soviet press in accomplishing the aims of the Communist Party. As a voice for the government and the Communist Party, the Soviet press was a major social force. Its editors have had to adapt to the party's official position and comply with its views. Under Communism the Soviet press had no functions independent of the government and Party, which examined and corrected all writings in any professional area to prevent deviation from authorized opinions. In the journals and newspapers, theories are argued and issues and problems are widely discussed. Because Soviet publications enjoy vast circulation, Soviet Pedagogy reaches as many as 78000 readers, such discussions

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<sup>112</sup>B. B. Komarovskij, "A. S. Makarenko--Ein Hervorragender Sowjetischer Pädagoge" [A. S. Makarenko--an outstanding Soviet pedagogue], in Hillig und Weitz, eds., Wege der Forschung, 213-244.

have a wide readership.<sup>113</sup>

During the 1940s Makarenko was lauded by the Soviet press which celebrated him as "the most shining figure in the history of Soviet education."<sup>114</sup> The following quotation, according to S. Lehrman, represented essentially the attitude of the Soviet professional press toward Makarenko.

Anton Semenovich Makarenko's literary-educational heritage constitutes a large contribution of Soviet culture. . . . Into the education of the new man, Makarenko invested all the strength of his wonderful soul, all the strength of his enormous will-power, all the strength of his intelligence. . . . Soviet teachers value A. S. Makarenko who is a model to them. His experience possesses the great strength of life itself. During the two decades since his death, Soviet education has grown and gained in strength. . . . Makarenko's heritage remains for the Soviet teacher a source of valuable ideas and methods. . . . Makarenko's heritage is being utilized in the schools of the national democracies. His books have been translated into many of the world's languages. . . . Life has confirmed the correctness of Gorky, who believed that Makarenko's "educational experiment" has worldwide significance.<sup>115</sup>

Froese offered this explanation for the startling change in opinion toward Makarenko's pedagogical principles:

A. S. Makarenko's glorification as an outstanding Soviet pedagogue should not come as a total surprise. Makarenko's pedagogical work is, in many ways, the first model for the anticipated and long concealed intention of modern Russian socialism. In the pedagogical domain of Makarenko's colony, the

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<sup>113</sup>This information is taken from S. Lehrman, 185-190.

<sup>114</sup>Froese, "Die Sowjetsozialistische Pädagogik," 323.

<sup>115</sup>N. A. Morozova, A. S. Makarenko: Seminarii [Seminar] (Leningrad: Ychpedgiz, 1961), 3-4. Cited by Lehrman, "The Pedagogical Ideas," 208-209.



Bolshevik, not the Communist, utopia became reality. There, long before the Party publicly proclaimed the guiding principles of the present Soviet system--conscious and disciplined subordination, functionalism, collectivism, efficiency contests, and Soviet patriotism--these principles had already become the unchallenged foundation for group life in the [Gorky] Colony.<sup>116</sup>

Froese pointed to another interesting parallel from a social perspective: the children with whom Makarenko undertook his pedagogical experiments were from the same social background as the majority of the Bolshevik Party, namely from destitute, distressed families. The task was to turn these sons and daughters, the young Lumpenproletariat (proletariat in rags), into the "new Soviet man."<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup>Froese, Triebkräfte, 262.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER VI

### MAKARENKO'S EDUCATIONAL THEORIES

My work as a teacher proved by and large successful and after the October Revolution unforeseen perspectives opened up before me. We teachers were quite intoxicated at these perspectives, to the point that we no longer were in control of ourselves, and in our enthusiasm for all kinds of things, we created, to be quite honest, a big disarray. Fortunately in 1920, I was entrusted with a colony for legal offenders.<sup>1</sup>

These comments, written by Makarenko in 1936, set the stage for the "amazing and extraordinary" pedagogical work with young lawbreakers that he began in the early days of the October Revolution, a time of "unprecedented opportunity for young Communists," a time that had, according to Makarenko, opened "new world horizons."<sup>2</sup> From his many statements about the Bolshevik Revolution, albeit made in retrospect, there can be no doubt that he was in full concordance with the ideological fundamentals of the Soviet state and with the revolutionary transformation of Russia. It appears from his writings that Makarenko had a

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<sup>1</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 185; Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 87.

<sup>2</sup>A. S. Makarenko, Learning to Live, 194-95; Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Culture and Politics under Stalin: A Reappraisal." Slavic Review (June 1976): 215.

genuine enthusiasm for the revolutionary transformations that promised to remake man and society and shared the revolutionary élan that was energizing Russia's spiritual and political life. He agreed wholeheartedly with the radical political and social determination to liberate the young Bolshevik state from its intolerable past and liquidate the old world, filled with "organized greed," self-interest and egoism.<sup>3</sup>

In much of his writing, Makarenko re-experienced the collision between a corrupt old world and an emerging social system charged with strong, idealistic hopes of achieving a new socialist state.<sup>4</sup> There was no doubt in his mind that Soviet education, its teachers and its schools, would participate actively in this achievement and that the school had to become a small model of the new society. To this end, new schools had to be created that clearly and distinctly differed from any existing school. "Yes, everything had to be given a different name and redefined."<sup>5</sup> The miserable heritage of the old world had to be left behind for the creation of the new socialist society.

In much of Makarenko's writing, his rejection of a corrupt past and his vision of a moral and socially just

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<sup>3</sup>Makarenko, Learning to Live, 197; Makarenko, A Book for Parents, 30.

<sup>4</sup>Makarenko, Learning to Live, 194-199; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 9, 142; vol. 7, 183-84, 192.

<sup>5</sup>Makarenko, Learning to Live, 198.

future clearly undergird his thinking. In explicit or implied fashion, his hatred and rejection of the old world and his hope of building a new and better world resurfaces in his novels, books, essays, and lectures. While one may risk oversimplifying his pedagogical achievements by viewing them in terms of such a polarization, its use has proved helpful in establishing connections between the various components of his pedagogical system, including the origin of his pedagogical ideas, his image of man, and his major educational aims, which in turn shaped some of his fundamental pedagogical categories and educational values.

Makarenko has been interpreted differently by scholars and educators who have examined his complex educational system. Some have seen his theories as emanating from Soviet ideology and primarily serving political goals; others have argued that his aims and motives were genuinely pedagogic. To obtain a complete representation of his pedagogical ideas, these opposing views need to be bridged. As an examination of Makarenko's educational theories has shown, the landscape that emerges is neither smooth and regular, rather it contains paradoxes and contradictions. This observation seems to conform with his own declaration, that "by and large, pedagogy is the most dialectical, mobile, complex and diversified of sciences." Makarenko called this assertion the "credo of

his pedagogical faith."<sup>6</sup>

Because Makarenko is the principal informant of his educational activities, this analysis is based mainly on his own declarations. What follows is an overview of Makarenko's general educational ideas and practices, often called novel, creative, and unique, which have surprised and absorbed scholars and pedagogues from around the world.

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<sup>6</sup>A. S. Makarenko, Problems of Soviet School Education, ed. by V. Aransky and A. Piskunov, trans. by O. Shartse (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 36. Hereafter cited as Problems.

### The Genesis of Makarenko's Educational Ideas

. . . . I maintain to this day that both the old and Western pedagogy are of no help to us. . . . And talking of the past, of the so-called traditional pedagogy, the bourgeois-classical pedagogy, I would, in the event that someone was to suggest Pestalozzi to be an educator in the [Dzerzhinsky] Commune, suggest to probably take him, but Rousseau would not even be permitted to cross the threshold.<sup>7</sup>

Makarenko spoke these words to a group of highly qualified pedagogues of the Institute for Communist Education in Summer 1936. In fall of the same year he repeated this view before workers in a Moscow ball-bearing factory. He explained that he had an aversion for Rousseau's ideas and that he did not know what he could learn from him, even though he had read him x-number of times. (It may be recalled that Makarenko was in conflict with the "progressive" ideas of early Soviet pedagogues who, as he perceived it, had derived their "free" beliefs from Rousseau). Makarenko added that Pestalozzi was a kind man who loved children, but that this was nothing new to Soviet education.<sup>8</sup> Strangely enough, Makarenko, in some public

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<sup>7</sup>A. S. Makarenko, "Rede im Höheren Institut für Kommunistische Bildung (Sommer 1936). [Lecture at the higher institute for communist education (Summer 1936)], in PSOW XXIII, 4 (1975), 114-115.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 115.

lectures (1936-1938) expressed his esteem for the classic figures in pedagogy and acknowledged his "deep reference for the old pedagogues," whom he had much read and from whom he had much benefitted.<sup>9</sup>

In September 1937 he published an article in the teacher's journal Kommunisticheskoe prosveshchenie (Communist Education) in which he wrote, "From the old world we have taken over a deplorable legacy. . . . We literally stood before a 'nothingness,' in pedagogy more so than in any other domain. For the better part, the bourgeois heritage proved to be harmful."<sup>10</sup> It seems quite clear that Makarenko did not have much faith in prerevolutionary pedagogy.

Victor Zilberman, in analyzing Makarenko's major educational concepts, concludes that "one could unmistakably detect a strong influence on Makarenko's theories of Russian progressive prerevolutionary thinkers and educators, Russian culture and history."<sup>11</sup> As examples he showed that Makarenko's belief in socially useful labor can be found in Pisarev's The Thinking Proletariat, and in Chernyshevsky's 1863 novel, What is to be done? Makarenko's idea to advance

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<sup>9</sup>Froese, Triebkräfte, 274; Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 126.

<sup>10</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 9, 143.

<sup>11</sup>Victor Zilberman, "Anton Makarenko: Contribution to Soviet Educational Theory." The Journal of Educational Thought 22 (April 1988): 37.

socially useful labor as an educational instrument could also be found in the writings of a number of prerevolutionary thinkers and educators such as the literary critic Belinsky (1811-1848) and in Ushinsky (1824-1870, scholar and pedagogical theoretician and practitioner). Makarenko's belief in the profound formative influences of the family, school, collective, and society, in short, his tenet that society educates man, can also be found in the opinions of the social critics Radishchev (1749-1802) and Herzen (1812-1870), who recognized the environment as a significant factor in forming man's moral, intellectual, and social qualities. Lastly, Zilberman points out that discipline, ranking highly in Makarenko's theory, was anchored deeply in Russian tradition and traceable to Peter the Great (1682-1725). Herzen also propagated discipline as a key factor in moral education.<sup>12</sup>

It is uncertain if Makarenko would have agreed to such comparisons, particularly after he so emphatically pronounced his distrust of traditional ways. Furthermore, and this is pointed out by the Marburger researcher Götz Hillig, there is no reliable information on the extent of Makarenko's knowledge in the domain of pedagogy. Did he know of the ideas of these progressive thinkers? In his application to the E. A. Litkens-Institute of Organizers of People's Education, submitted in Summer 1922, Makarenko gave

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 36-37.



no relevant details. He simply stated that in his special field, that of education, he had "read a lot and reflected much."<sup>13</sup>

One further point may be added regarding the possible origin of Makarenko's pedagogical ideas in past history. In 1932 Makarenko wrote that in educating the Bolshevik--the builder of socialism--or in fighting the bourgeoisie, one may use the same procedures, much in the way that the same materials are used--brick, concrete, iron and wood--in building a temple or a club for workers. The point of consideration did not lie in the selection of these materials, but in their "connection to each other," in their "mutual groupings," in their "corresponding tendencies," and, most of all in the "requirements--not given by pedagogy--but given by politics." Makarenko adds that politics "must be organically connected to pedagogy."<sup>14</sup> Here he seems to imply that had he used traditional ideas, he would have applied them in new forms and with new content, according to the demands of the moment.

Makarenko was equally critical of early Soviet pedagogical thinking. (See chapters 1 and 5) He clearly expressed his dislike of progressive, child-centered philosophy, ridiculed the "pedagogy of the good heart," and

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<sup>13</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 126; Hillig, ed., MM III, 35.

<sup>14</sup>A. S. Makarenko, Werke, vol. V, 479.

called the Commissariat for Education a "haven for impractical intellectuals."<sup>15</sup>

Based on Makarenko's testimony, he ruled out prerevolutionary and early Soviet pedagogical theory as a reliable source for his own ideas. One must also recognize that Makarenko--because of his opposition to official educational theory--was forced to articulate his ideas and pronounce his thoughts more distinctly in order to justify himself before his critics, a step he might otherwise not have taken. Until more relevant archival sources become available, information as to the genesis of Makarenko's pedagogical ideas remains inconclusive. The Hungarian scholar Ference Pataki, in reflecting on the problem of determining the genesis of Makarenko's pedagogical conceptions, regrets the loss of Makarenko's examination paper, written at the Poltava Teachers' Institute, (1917) and entitled "The Crisis of Contemporary Pedagogy." Pataki believes that this document could be a forerunner of Makarenko's pedagogical system.<sup>16</sup>

The renowned Makarenko scholar L. Froese concedes that the origin of Makarenko's pedagogical concept is difficult to trace in its separate parts. He suggests that

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<sup>15</sup>Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit," in Wege der Forschung, 130, 135; Fitzpatrick, "Culture and Politics under Stalin," 226.

<sup>16</sup>Hillig, "Das II. Internationale Makarenko-Symposium Falkenstein in 1971," in PSOW XXIV, 2 (1976): 76.

Makarenko's overall conception is both pedagogical and ideological in nature, a distinction that Makarenko evidently did not make. Froese calls it the great tragedy of Makarenko's life that he was obviously not conscious of this discrepancy.<sup>17</sup> Froese repudiates the interpretation--prevailing in the 1950s and 1960s--that Makarenko's pedagogical concepts were simply an offshoot of the Soviet system. To balance such a one-sided picture, he stresses the value of examining Makarenko's individual life experiences, childhood events, and other influences of a formative nature. As an example he points to the strong impact that Gorky's writings had on Makarenko at a time when Makarenko was struggling for clarity in ideology and life philosophy. (See chapter four.) By tracing the fundamental features of Makarenko's pedagogical concepts to basic features of his character that, he believes, conformed to certain experiences at home, Froese makes another interesting observation:

His parents in their entire nature were of very opposite temperaments. Makarenko speaks of them in his novel Honor and in his A Book for Parents. From the memories of his parents, loyally guarded by Makarenko throughout his entire life, and from fragments that he, particularly taciturn in this respect, had left behind in some of his writings, one can conclude that their daily way of life must have impressed upon him from an early age on. It is not coincidental that his character was shaped by this unintended effect of his parents. (See also chapter

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<sup>17</sup>Froese, Triebkräfte, 233.

two)<sup>18</sup>

Two further points of interest regarding the genesis of Makarenko's pedagogical ideas are described by the Marburg researcher G. Hillig. Makarenko's political posture during his early career as a teacher and during his student years at the Poltava Teachers' Institute (1905-1917) was to be open and democratic regarding political and social changes, similar in attitude to the majority of the Russian intelligentsia. As his brother Vitalii testified, Makarenko was surprised by the political uprisings in 1917. Based on recent research, it was further possible for Hillig to prove that Makarenko began an intensive study of the writings of Lenin as late as 1928, not in 1920, as had been commonly believed. It further appears most unlikely that Makarenko was familiar with the famous speech that Lenin gave to the third Komsomol Congress in 1920. These findings may weaken the contention held by some scholars in both East and West that Makarenko's pedagogical ideas had grown out of Marxist-Leninism.<sup>19</sup>

Another related fact is the existence of a colony for delinquent youth in Triby near Poltava, in the immediate neighborhood of the Gorky Colony. Founded in 1919--one year before the Gorky Colony--and named after the peasant writer

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 220.

<sup>19</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 127; Hillig, "Der schwierige Weg zum Kommunismus," in Hundert Jahre, 213-215.

v. G. Korolenko (1853-1921), this colony was based on agricultural labor and was well known within the Ukraine and elsewhere. Its basic principles sounded 'Makarenkonean': "Only labor--that is productive labor--that creates specific values, can re-educate children. The best educator for every child is the organized collective."<sup>20</sup> Makarenko was well aware of this colony. He mentioned it once, almost derogatorily and only in passing, in his "Poem" (The Road to Life).<sup>21</sup> Hillig points out that these "basic principles" of the Korolenko Colony may have served as a model to Makarenko and that in searching for the origin of Makarenko's pedagogical creed one should look also to Korolenko, whose writings, incidentally, were well known to Makarenko.<sup>22</sup>

On the origin of his educational ideas, Makarenko himself had this to say:

In 1920, when I began with the re-education of lawbreaking youngsters, I possessed neither an instrument nor a method. I found myself in the woods with an oil lamp and a horde of bandits.<sup>23</sup> Previous techniques used in work with juvenile offenders were of no use to me: no new experience had been gleaned as yet, nor were there any books to turn

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<sup>20</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 130.

<sup>21</sup>A. S. Makarenko, GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 80, 281; The Road to Life, vol. 1, 136.

<sup>22</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 130, note 22.

<sup>23</sup>A. S. Makarenko, Werke, vol. VII, 469.

to. My position was very difficult, almost hopeless.<sup>24</sup>

As a result, and the actual process is eloquently documented in his writings, Makarenko forged his pedagogical theories out of his own experiences, laboriously gathering insights and ideas piece by piece. In a lecture to educators, titled "On My Experiences," Makarenko said:

I know quite well that my ideas are shaped by my pedagogical experiences. I also know that there exist other experiences and that, had my experiences been different, my thinking may have been different too.<sup>25</sup>

A few days before his death, in a lecture to teachers and writers, Makarenko summarized his conclusions: "To the extent that I reflected upon my experiences I gradually arrived at a certain system of perceptions that may perhaps differ from the conventional system."<sup>26</sup>

One of Makarenko's critics, the educational scientist and psychologist H. Vascenko, who had known Makarenko personally, expounded that "Makarenko wanted pedagogy to begin with himself."<sup>27</sup> A much more sympathetic view comes from I. Rüttenauer, who wrote:

Makarenko was a practitioner of education, not a theoretician, he never worked out a pedagogical system. Of course . . . he felt accountable [to himself] for

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<sup>24</sup>Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 87; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 185.

<sup>25</sup>A. S. Makarenko, Werke, vol. V, 260.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 291.

<sup>27</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 127; see also Hillig, "Zur zeitgenössischen Aufnahme der pädagogischen Ideen A. S. Makarenkos," in PSOW XXVII, 3 (1979): 65-76.

his pedagogical efforts . . . and achieved--albeit vaguely--a pedagogical conception through his educational endeavors that he verified, and, with the help of his experience, corrected and made more precise, so that in the end there stood before him a completed and coherent outline of "Soviet education."<sup>28</sup>

From documents gathered so far, including Makarenko's own accounts and current research, it appears that (a) the origin of his educational ideas can neither be found in prerevolutionary nor in early Soviet educational theory; (b) existing evidence does not support the belief of some scholars that Makarenko's educational theories were an off-shoot of Bolshevik ideology; (c) Makarenko insisted that his theories were developed on the basis of practical experience and his conclusions drawn from these experiences.

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<sup>28</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 161.

### Makarenko's Image of Man

We, who began our work in 1905, schooled our thinking and our will on . . . . Lenin's and the Bolshevik Party's struggle. But, thanks to the work of Maxim Gorky, our feelings and the outlines and images of the inner nature of man, took configuration within us.<sup>29</sup>

Makarenko wrote these words in 1936, following the death of Maxim Gorky. In 1905, when he began to shape his image of man, he was seventeen years old. Fifteen years later when he began work with lawbreaking adolescents, Makarenko would again "take recourse" to this image of man. (See chapter four.) In his tribute to Gorky he wrote that "when the October Revolution had suddenly unlocked unforeseen possibilities regarding the development of free human beings, and abundant pedagogical possibilities for his educational task had opened before him," he took as a model Gorky's "passion and faith in man." Gorky's affirmation of man's eminent worth, his capacity to see the "splendid qualities," the "spiritual strength" in every human being, was enormously valuable in Makarenko's early pedagogical thinking.<sup>30</sup> Recalling the depraved behavior of his raucous minors and the daily troubles and conflicts that plagued the

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<sup>29</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 180.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.



colony, Makarenko recognized how difficult, often almost impossible, it was to discern the good in man. Exercising Gorky's optimism, he resolved that one had to project the good in man, and that this, even at the risk of making mistakes, was every pedagogue's responsibility.<sup>31</sup>

Five years later, in 1925, Makarenko wrote to Gorky that without such unrestricted faith in man the colony could not have operated for five years.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the public's perception of the colonists remained guarded; as Makarenko wrote in another letter, only with great difficulty had the colony "shaken off" the official designation "colony for juvenile lawbreakers." Makarenko related to Gorky that reports and newspaper articles classified the colonists as "juvenile criminals," which troubled him.<sup>33</sup> Makarenko had made similar observations in the Dzerzhinsky Commune when visitors or government officials asked "tactless" questions of the communards. He describes one such example:

"They are waifs, aren't they?"

"No, they're colonists."

On the bench Begunok chuckled to himself.

"Take this boy, for example. Was he a waif?"

Volodya stood up and cast a cryptic, friendly look at Zakharov.

"I am a colonist in the fourth detachment," he said.

"But before that, you were a street-waif, weren't you?"

For some reason Begunok could not help laughing.

All the same, he felt that some reply was called for.

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 186; see also Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 89.

<sup>32</sup>Makarenko, Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1 340.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 345.

"I've - er - forgotten."

"What do you mean, you've forgotten? Do you mean to say you've forgotten that you were once a waif?"

"Uh - huh . . ."

"That's quite impossible!"

"Word of honor, I have!"<sup>34</sup>

This dialogue is revealing for another reason: it shows that the children have forgotten their past. For the pupils to forget their lives prior to joining the commune was most important to Makarenko, who explained to Gorky that he thought it absurd to analyze every detail of the colonists past. In Makarenko's words:

We [in the colony] have taken another position. In the beginning, it took some effort to ignore the criminal acts of our young people, but then we became accustomed to doing so; today we are absolutely not interested in their past. I was finally also successful in stopping [the authorities] from sending records and studies of a child.<sup>35</sup>

Makarenko expounds this position in many parts of his writings, stating that everyone in the colony had come to a silent agreement that the past was over and unworthy of remembrance. No one asked a new arrival where he came from. However for "purely pragmatic reasons," Makarenko had tried to "penetrate into the mysteries of a child's physiognomy and muscular system," in order to test a newcomers's capacities as a comrade and worker.<sup>36</sup> Rüttenauer comments on Makarenko's knowledge of each pupil's

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<sup>34</sup>Makarenko, Learning to Live, 202-203.

<sup>35</sup>Makarenko, Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 344.

<sup>36</sup>A. S. Makarenko, "About the Gorky Colony," in Werke, vol. I, 760; see also Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 81.

individuality and peculiarities, something that Gorky also had observed during his visit to the Gorky Colony.<sup>37</sup>

By ignoring the child's delinquent past, Makarenko also ignored such labels as "moral defectives."<sup>38</sup> He believed the children were "living their lives, splendid lives" and that was why they should be treated as comrades and citizens. You "have to respect and keep in view their right to enjoy life and their duty to bear responsibility."<sup>39</sup> As Froese points out, Makarenko encountered his youthful bandits as he had encountered his former "unspoiled students."<sup>40</sup> In 1938, during a literary assembly, Makarenko announced that he never had believed and still did not believe that his colonists were "morally defective," and "that they never were."<sup>41</sup> Makarenko concluded that the idea of a degenerate child was a fetish created by unsuccessful pedagogues.<sup>42</sup> He suggested that the concept "defectiveness" be rejected when applied to human beings; instead, one should concentrate on the defective relationships between

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<sup>37</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 75.

<sup>38</sup>The Road to Life, vol.1, 34; GW Marburg Edition, vol.3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 21-22.

<sup>39</sup>Makarenko, Learning to Live, 199.

<sup>40</sup>Froese, "Das Pädagogisch-Literarische Werk A. S. Makarenkos," 114.

<sup>41</sup>Werke, vol. III, 465.

<sup>42</sup>Makarenko, Learning to Live, 201.

persons and society.<sup>43</sup> Makarenko explained:

I do not believe that there are morally defective human beings. One only needs to put an individual into normal life conditions, one needs to only make certain demands and give the possibilities to fulfill these demands, then he [the individual] will become a human being like all of us, of full value, a normal individual.<sup>44</sup>

Makarenko's conviction, that a human being is only defective because he lives in a defective social structure and under faulty conditions, was in direct opposition to the idea of the "born criminal," advanced by the Italian physician and criminologist, Cesare Lombroso (1836-1909). In his writings and lectures Makarenko repeatedly challenged Lombroso's assertion of a criminal type, predestined from birth to commit punishable acts, or of people born with perverted characters. Makarenko called this notion a "primitive superstition" that had spread through society.<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere he wrote, "Born criminals, or people born with corrupt characters do not exist at all. Through my experience I could convince myself of this one hundred percent."<sup>46</sup>

Makarenko also found himself in intense disagreement with the pedologists' image of man. (The pedologists were a popular movement that formulated a "scientific" and

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<sup>43</sup>Werke, vol. VII, 427.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., vol. III, 467.

<sup>45</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 1, 114.

<sup>46</sup>Werke, vol. V, 134.

psychological orientation toward the child. See chapters one and five.) Makarenko repudiated their opinion that the child was an object that could be known through tests and measurements. He objected to analyzing the child's past and stated--to Gorky--that such a vivisection could only turn a person into a corpse.<sup>47</sup> To derive an image of a child through analysis and experiments was antithetical to Makarenko's optimistic image of an inherently wholesome and morally upright human being.

As an educator, Makarenko's holding such a universal and positive image of the child was decisive, as this image was closely linked to his educational methods and aims. In his writings and lectures, Makarenko emphasized having serious doubts that the methods used in working with formerly unsupervised children should differ from those used with normal children.<sup>48</sup> He made his point by criticizing the pedologists, who would study the personality of each child individually, ending up with numerous diverse pictures that in turn resulted in a multitude of educational methods. "So many children, so many methods."<sup>49</sup> To derive one's teaching methods from experimental psychology and from the particular

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<sup>47</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 144.

<sup>48</sup>Werke, vol. V, 235; see also A. S. Makarenko, "Einige pädagogische Schlussfolgerungen aus meiner Erfahrung." [Some pedagogical conclusions based on my experience] in PSOW, XXXI, 4 (1983): 81. Hereafter cited as "Schlussfolgerungen."

<sup>49</sup>Werke, vol. V, 359.

circumstances of each individual child was a logic that Makarenko rejected. In a lecture he explained:

Another logic is needed, one that derives pedagogical methods from our aims. . . . We know, what kind of citizen our country needs. We must have an excellent idea, what it is, the new man, what traits he must have, how his character and the system if his beliefs must be, his education, his capacities as a worker. We must know how our new, the socialistic, the communist man, must distinguish himself.<sup>50</sup>

With these words Makarenko firmly connected his image of man with his educational aims. This will be the topic in the next section of this chapter. In sum, Makarenko modelled his image of man on Gorky's, converting Gorky's optimistic view of human nature into a vision of the new Soviet man of the future. On this combined image he based his educational aims. Was Makarenko cognizant of the fact that his pedagogical aims were saturated with ideological intentions? And if so, did this trouble him?

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 360.

### Makarenko's Educational Aims

Makarenko considered the "very difficult question of the educational aim" to be of the greatest importance. To his immense regret this question had become a "forgotten category" in pedagogical theory. Repeatedly, Makarenko stressed the need to have a vision of the overriding aim of education and to focus all efforts on reaching this goal. It is therefore not surprising that he stated his own educational aim on the first page of his Pedagogical Poem (The Road to Life). There, he describes being summoned in September 1920 by the Chief of the Gubernia Department of Education and asked to assume responsibility of directing a colony for young vagabonds. Makarenko recalled their conversation:

"Look here, my friend," he [the chief] said . . . .  
 "what matters is the creation of the new man . . . .  
 there's such a great work to be done. . . ."The main  
 thing isn't just a colony for juvenile delinquents,  
 but--you know! . . . social re-education. We've got to  
 create the new man, our sort of man. That's your job!"<sup>51</sup>

We know from Makarenko's life and work that the chief's request--to create the new man--did indeed become his all-consuming educational challenge. It is noteworthy

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<sup>51</sup>The Road to Life, vol 1. pp. 1-2, 5; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, p. 3.

that Makarenko's primary educational aim came straight from the Soviet regime. Froese points to what he called this utterly paradoxical situation: the new Bolshevik movement, hardly come to power, wanted to attain "the loftiest human ideals with the help of roughnecks."<sup>52</sup>

Makarenko fully agreed with this challenging mandate. From numerous statements it is obvious that he was committed to the social and political goals of the Bolshevik regime to create a free, nonoppressive and nonexploitive society. To create the new man for such a society became Makarenko's formula, expressing his ideological as well as his social-pedagogical commitments. For example, in a lecture to Union members in Moscow, he stated, "We are followers of an active Bolshevik pedagogy, a pedagogy that creates personalities, that creates the . . . new man."<sup>53</sup> The new man, in Makarenko's vision, was not to be the "harmonic personality" proclaimed by Soviet pedagogues in 1918 and still clung to by Lunacharsky in 1928.<sup>54</sup> The new man, according to Makarenko's vision, was the type of human being needed by the new socialist society: not so much for his professional qualifications and career goals but for his conduct and demeanor, his character traits and personal

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<sup>52</sup>Froese, Triebkräfte, 276.

<sup>53</sup>Werke, vol. V, 361.

<sup>54</sup>Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit," 134.



qualities.<sup>55</sup> Thus, Makarenko envisioned his educational task to consist of shaping human character according to the needs of Soviet society. He repeated, "The aims of our educational work must solely derive from the requirements and the needs of society."<sup>56</sup>

It soon became apparent to Makarenko that such a task could not be accomplished within the traditional classroom setting. To educate the new man for the requirements of a new society had to be the all-embracing process of upbringing and character formation. To reduce education to mere teaching and instruction was in Makarenko's eyes "impossible."<sup>57</sup> Education in Soviet society could only be a social process. In A Book for Parents he wrote:

A Soviet person cannot be educated by the direct influence of one personality, whatever qualities this personality may possess. Education is a social process in the broadest sense of the term. Everything contributes to education: people, things, events, but first of all people.<sup>58</sup>

Again and again Makarenko emphasized that education was a process that took place within the entire socialist society and that educational aims could only arise out of the life, social needs, and aspirations of the Soviet

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<sup>55</sup>Werke, vol. V, 468.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 461.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 113.

<sup>58</sup>A Book for Parents, 11.

people. Therefore educational aims could never emanate from biology or psychology.<sup>59</sup> Makarenko's tenet of separating education in the sense of classroom teaching from education in the sense of upbringing will be discussed later in this chapter.

It was clear to Makarenko that to create a new man for a new society, "old" (meaning traditional and bourgeois) methods were unfit. Unlike early Soviet pedagogues who explored Western pedagogical theories to create the "harmonious personality," Makarenko, during his work in the Gorky Colony, had ample experience to gain a clear idea of the methods he believed would educate the new man. These methods were to be worthy of the epoch and the revolution. They had to be at once all-embracing and uniform. They had to allow for the individual to develop distinct personal attributes and to preserve his individuality.<sup>60</sup> Thus, it was "quite obvious" for Makarenko to find the right methods. In his words:

We simply have to understand the position of the new man within the new society. The socialistic society is founded on the principles of the collective. There must not be an isolated individual . . . but only members of the socialist collective.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Werke, vol. V, 114.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 351. Makarenko added that such a task would surmount the strength of pedagogy if it were not for Marxism that had already resolved the problem of the individual and the collective.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 352.

Makarenko expounded this belief by stressing that since--in this new socialist society--no one could exist outside the collective, the task of education was to create a collective person. In a letter to Gorky, he explained that this could be accomplished only within a collective setting.

Within communist education, the living working collective is the only and primary instrument of education. Therefore the principal efforts . . . must be directed to creating and sustaining such a collective.<sup>62</sup>

In his opening comments--during a lecture cycle given to educators--Makarenko said again, "The main form of education is the collective."<sup>63</sup> And in his article "Pedagogues Shrug Their Shoulders" he designated the collective as his pedagogical aim: "The pedagogical aim. . . can be formulated in general terms: creation of a real collective, creating the real influence of the collective upon the personality."<sup>64</sup> Makarenko's aims could thus be reiterated: To create the new Soviet man (who is a collective person), for a new Soviet society (that is a collective society), with new Soviet methods (methods of collective education).

In what follows, Makarenko's educational aims will

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<sup>62</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 398; see also Werke, vol. V, 239.

<sup>63</sup>Werke, vol. v, 120.

<sup>64</sup>Werke, vol. II, 442; see also Pädagogische Werke, vol. I, 218.

be examined with regard to three questions. (1) What, in Makarenko's eyes, constituted the new Soviet man? (2) What is the collective that was to be Makarenko's main educational instrument? What constitutes education in a collective according to Makarenko's experience?

### The New Soviet Man.

Makarenko invariably underscored the importance of the "new" Soviet man having no resemblance to the "old" Russian man of tsarist times. The difference between the two is characterized by Gorky in a travel story. He wrote that the pioneers (members of the Communist youth organization) had made an excellent impression on him. Only once in five months had some children reminded him of the old Russia. A ten-year-old boy walking along a street in the village of Morozovka met a boy the same age sitting by his front door, and the following dialogue ensued:

"Mischa, where are you going?"

"Me? Nowhere. And you--where to?"

"Me nowhere either."

"Then lets go together."<sup>65</sup>

Gorky's comment: "pioneers know exactly where they must go."<sup>66</sup> Makarenko, inspired by Gorky, also had an ideal image of the new man: someone who no longer drifted through life passively accepting a futile fate, but one who took reality into his own hands, striving toward a better future.

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<sup>65</sup>Gorky, cited in Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 21.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

The new Soviet man, Makarenko stressed, had fundamentally to distinguish himself from the bourgeois person. In a lecture he stated that he needed a "complete program" for developing human character according to the needs of society. Speaking of his own experiences, he recalled, "In my work I could not have functioned without such a program."<sup>67</sup> On reflection however, Makarenko wondered if this program had to be identical for everybody? Did he need to press each child into a norm? Before his listeners Makarenko pondered, "If so, I must sacrifice the individual charm, the originality and the peculiar beauty of personality."<sup>68</sup> Makarenko admitted that he could not resolve this question in the abstract, but in the course of ten years he had, from a practical point of view, settled this impasse; he found that there had to be a general program appropriate to all, as well as flexibility for individual circumstances. This decision was based on Makarenko's experience with one of his students, a talented actor. Against Makarenko's wish that he become an actor, this boy wanted to become an engineer, a profession popular at the time. Makarenko applied his and the collective's pressure to persuade the boy to become an actor and, in the end, he "surrendered." Troubled by this forceful intervention, Makarenko later questioned whether he really had the right

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<sup>67</sup>Problems, 37; Werke, vol. V, 118.

<sup>68</sup>Problems, 37; Werke, vol. V, 118.

to tamper with a pupil's decision. He admitted that this question remained unresolved. He also expressed his conviction that when confronted with the choice of either intervening in the development of a person's character and guiding it in a positive direction or passively looking on, the teacher had the right to intervene. However, "in every separate case the question has to be approached individually."<sup>69</sup>

Shortly before his death, Makarenko made one further point as to what should constitute the new Soviet man. He stated that the virtues and moral characteristics associated with the Soviet citizen were also desirable qualities for people in bourgeois society. Makarenko asked, "Is it not the striving of any school in England to educate a boy who is strong of will, honest and neat?" In his answer, Makarenko pointed to an engaging difference that he believed should exist between the virtuous qualities of a bourgeois person and those of the new communist man: He explained that "with us," that is, in Soviet society, every moral quality, every virtue had to be filled with a new content, a moral substance. He illustrated this with the example of matter-of-factness, a trait he believed bourgeois society had been using as an instrument of exploitation and self-interest to gain advantage over others. In Soviet society, by contrast, matter-of-factness was a moral quality that

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<sup>69</sup>Problems, 39; Werke, vol. V, 119-20.

served to support each one's efforts in building the new society and working for the common good. Makarenko wanted to show that the Soviet man did not distinguish himself by the possession of moral qualities alone, but by the way he applied these qualities and by the moral meaning he attributed to them.<sup>70</sup>

In 1932, seven years prior to the above mentioned lecture, Makarenko had delineated his ideal of the new Soviet man and those traits he believed to be essential moral attributes of the Soviet person. Because they embrace many of Makarenko's basic educational values--which will be discussed later in this chapter--they are enumerated here.

According to Makarenko, the new Soviet man was to be a cultivated Soviet worker. He "had to experience his own dignity and the dignity of his class. . . . He had to feel his responsibility to his class. He had to be capable of succumbing to a comrade as well as giving him orders. He had to be polite, stern, kind-hearted and merciless, according to the circumstances of his life and his battles. He had to be an active organizer. He had to be steadfast and hardened; he had to be able to control himself and to affect others. If the collective was to punish him, he had to respect not only the collective but also the punishment. He had to be cheerful, bright, and disciplined, capable of fighting and of building, capable of living and of loving

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<sup>70</sup>Werke, vol. V, 295-96.

life; he had to be happy. He should be like this already today, every day, not at a distant future."<sup>71</sup>

### The Collective: Instrument for Education

#### The Educational Collective for Children and Youth

Froese commented that Makarenko's concept of the collective, the cardinal principle of his educational system, can neither be grasped pedagogically nor ideologically.<sup>72</sup> Makarenko derived this notion out of what was to him a distinctly new situation, one that he found socially and pedagogically agonizing. Having unsuccessfully sought answers in Soviet and classical educational literature "there remained only the path of his own creative initiative."<sup>73</sup> Makarenko had written to Gorky that in his Pedagogical Poem he had tried to describe--in an inexperienced and mistaken fashion--how he had created a collective out of lost and backward youth, a collective that had to go through stages of development before he could

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<sup>71</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 7, 38-39; Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 215-16.

<sup>72</sup>According to Froese, the term "collective" was a Bolshevik, not a Marxist concept. It surfaced in the context of education for the first time in 1918, in Lunacharsky's "Speech at the First All-Russia Congress on Education." It is not clear when Makarenko became familiar with this concept but in 1938 he stated that "unfortunately, in none of our books is there a description of what a collective is, especially what a collective is where children are educated." Werke, vol. V, 265.

<sup>73</sup>Froese, "Die Sowjetsozialistische Pädagogik A. S. Makarenkos," in Wege der Forschung, 325-26.



apply it as his main instrument of education.<sup>74</sup> To appreciate fully Makarenko's predicament it is essential to recall the early days of the colony, when Makarenko was confronted with waifs and young bandits whom he aimed to transform into the new man. Makarenko's own words give a glimpse of the magnitude of the assignment.

The colonists . . . were on the lowest possible cultural level. These were precisely the types selected for our colony, which was especially intended for difficult cases. . . . Hence there remained a wide field for all sorts of eccentricity, for the manifestation of personalities sunk in semibarbarity, demoralized by spiritual loneliness.<sup>75</sup>

Makarenko maintained that he and his helpers were but ordinary mortals, full of shortcomings, their days filled with "error and confused thinking."<sup>76</sup> The colony was without adequate food, shelter, and clothing. Makarenko struggled with the question of how he could ever begin to educate his charges under such dire conditions. He opposed using an individual approach with each child, as the educational authorities favored. Not being sure of pedagogical techniques, Makarenko dimly knew that his method was neither to discipline a colonist nor granting him full freedom. He began to believe that Soviet pedagogy needed an entirely new logic: "From the collective to the individual.

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<sup>74</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 398.

<sup>75</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 94-96; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, p. 56.

<sup>76</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, p. 127; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, p. 56.

only the collective can be the object of Soviet education."<sup>77</sup> By educating the collective Makarenko believed he would discover forms of organization by which each individual would find "highest discipline" and "greatest freedom."<sup>78</sup> Yet, Makarenko did not consider himself to be a man of theories. As Anweiler put it, Makarenko built his collective step by step out of the practical demands and necessities of the day. In the collective he saw the only path to education.<sup>79</sup> Many years later, in 1938, speaking to educators, Makarenko gave this definition of a collective:

What is a collective? It is not simply a gathering, or a group of interacting individuals, as the pedologists used to teach. The collective is an organized community of individuals pursuing a clear purpose and governed by its collective organs. Wherever there is an organization of the collective there are organs of the collective, and an organization of the collective's representatives empowered by it [the collective]. The relationship between comrades is not based on friendship or love or neighborliness but on responsible and mutual dependence. . . . Comrades . . . are not connected by friendship but by the joint responsibility for work, by their common participation in the work of the collective.<sup>80</sup>

Because Makarenko saw organizational structure as the most essential element of the collective, we shall examine how Makarenko's colonists--an originally formless group of resisting youth--organized themselves into a

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<sup>77</sup>Werke, vol. I, 698.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Anweiler, "A. S. Makarenko und die Pädagogik seiner Zeit," 128.

<sup>80</sup>Werke, vol. V, 216; Problems, 139.

single-minded, purposeful community, an organism that Makarenko considered his most important "instrument of education." The first steps in forming an organizational structure, so Makarenko wrote in his "Poem," (The Road to Life) were surprisingly spontaneous, starting with "a trifle." In winter of 1923, (three years after the colony began), during an excursion to the forest to cut firewood, the colonists themselves made some important "organizational discoveries" that would determine the collective's future forms.<sup>81</sup> One of the boys jokingly announced that his "detachment" had cut twelve cartloads of wood. The word "detachment" immediately "stuck" with the boys. It had a romantic connotation and Makarenko did not want to interfere with this "half-conscious play of the revolutionary instincts."<sup>82</sup> One of the boys--who always played first fiddle--was nominated commander of the detachment. The boys began to call other groups that were assigned to specific jobs "detachments" and organized more of them, each under a commander. Eventually all colonists were organized into work detachments headed by a commander who was initially appointed by Makarenko. These detachments became known as the primary collective and constituted the backbone of the colony. Over time each detachment had its

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<sup>81</sup>The Road to Live, vol. 1, 344; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, p. 203.

<sup>82</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 349; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 205-206.

own place in the dining room and in the dormitory. Except for schoolwork, daily life of a colonist proceeded within his or her primary collective. The commanders were given far-reaching responsibilities; they had to supervise their detachment, organize the work in the shops or on the farm, and were responsible for discipline within their detachment.

Soon enough, Makarenko began to call commanders' meetings--the boys named them "council of commanders"--and Makarenko undertook nothing of importance without consulting with them. Eventually the council of commanders became the executive organ for the entire colony. Their decisions, once made and formally announced, were final. Only the full assembly of all colonists had the power to veto decisions made by the council. Even Makarenko had to submit to the will of the commanders. By involving the commander council in planning and by endowing it with decision making authority, Makarenko enlarged the active participation and cooperation of the entire colony. The colonists, under Makarenko's guidance, had established a collective form of self-government that increasingly assumed the responsibilities for the entire life of the colony--educational, social , economic, and recreational.

The colonists established one important rule: the commanders were not to become an elite group. They were neither excused from work assignments nor granted other

privileges and favors.<sup>83</sup> A commander was in charge of his detachment no more than three months. As a result, almost every colonist was to hold this position at least once during his stay at the colony.

The last basic improvement in the detachment system--"one which turned out to be the most important invention of our collective"--was to become known as a "mixed" detachment. It was a temporary detachment, lasting no longer than a week, that performed short-term work duties such as seasonal agricultural work. Each mixed detachment had its own commander, even when it consisted of only two members. This commander, appointed by the council of commanders, was normally a rank-and-file member in his primary collective. In the mixed detachment he was now in charge of colonists who were normally commanders in their primary collective. According to Makarenko, this system was unique in that it created an intricate chain of subordination, making it impossible for any one member to dominate the colony's collective organization. It also provided alternate functions of organizing and working, of command and subordination.<sup>84</sup> As Lilge stated, "it was in this alternation between serving and commanding, doing work assignments and having some organizing responsibility, that Makarenko saw

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<sup>83</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 352; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, p. 207-208.

<sup>84</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 357; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 211.

the chief value of communistic education."<sup>85</sup> Makarenko stated in his "Poem" that it was the mixed detachment structure alone that made it possible for all detachments to be fused into a "real, firm and single collective."<sup>86</sup> "At last," so Lilge remarked, "after nearly three years of groping and arduous labor, he had found a type of social organization through which he might control and reform the behavior of the young hooligans."<sup>87</sup>

This leadership scheme never basically changed and remained Makarenko's most important instrument of education. Over time Makarenko found that the primary collective should no longer be organized according to work assignments nor according to age--corresponding to their level of school work--but according to the principle, "everyone with whom he pleases."<sup>88</sup> Makarenko was of the opinion that a primary collective was pedagogically most effective if it resembled a family.<sup>89</sup> Eventually, he discovered that a primary collective should not consist of less than seven nor more than fifteen members. Experience had shown that forming an exclusive group of friends, or the disintegration of one

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<sup>85</sup>Lilge, A. S. Makarenko, 16-17.

<sup>86</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 352; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 208.

<sup>87</sup>Lilge, A. S. Makarenko, 16.

<sup>88</sup>Werke, vol. V, 170.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 268.

large primary collective into two could be avoided by regulating the number of members within one primary collective.<sup>90</sup>

H. H. Groothoff observed that, initially, Makarenko's youth collective did not arise out of pedagogical considerations, but out of the functional needs of the colony's daily life.<sup>91</sup> However, by virtue of a unique organizational structure and careful regulation of responsibilities, Makarenko had transformed a formless gang of youths into a social organism that he regarded as his principal instrument of education.

It is important to note that the organization of the collective represented but the outer scheme, a scheme filled with what Rüttenauer called the "educational life" of the colonists.<sup>92</sup> This educational life embraced a rich program of labor and education, of play and recreation, of celebrations and festivals, of human interaction and human relations. Some fundamental aspects of this educational life will be considered in the following section.

Based on his experience in the Gorky Colony and Dzerzhinsky Commune, Makarenko believed in the primary

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 265.

<sup>91</sup>Hans Hermann Groothoff, "Makarenko und das Problem der Selbstentfremdung in der europäischen und sowjetischen Pädagogik"[Makarenko and the problem of self-estrangement in European and Soviet pedagogy], in Wege der Forschung, 361.

<sup>92</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 41.

educational role of the collective. Often these beliefs were stated in his lectures and writings as doctrines. The following are some of the tenets that best illustrate the primarily educational role of the collective.

1. The collective plays a major role in forming moral and virtuous character traits. Once members have formed a sense of belonging in the collective, their feelings of egoism and self-interest are gradually replaced by consideration for the well-being of the overall collective.<sup>93</sup> By believing in the welfare and happiness of the whole community, members of the collective will exert their efforts and energies in favor of the collective and devote their interests toward the common good.

Due to the nature of the collective's structure-- Makarenko emphasizes that it is a social organism based on mutual support and reciprocal functions--each member is given the opportunity to develop social habits, friendships with peers, and co-operation within the collective. Because all members gain practice in giving orders as well as in obeying them, in commanding others and in serving them, in organizing work and in doing work, social awareness and feelings of equality are fostered. Members within the collective cannot

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<sup>93</sup>Froese, "Die Sowjetsozialistische Pädagogik Makarenkos," 329.



dominate or exploit others, they share equally in the collective's responsibilities as well as in the benefit of their efforts.

2. The collective plays a major role in forming good manners, standards of behavior and social modes of conduct, as well as in forming habits of orderliness, personal and social hygiene, courtesy, and tact. Makarenko called them "elementary labor-and-life habits."<sup>94</sup> He believed that forming "essential behaviors" would take a long time, that this required experience, habit, and prolonged practice. In his words: "For this kind of practice we need a gymnasium, one which is equipped with the kind of trapezoid and parallel bars as are necessary nowadays. Our Soviet collective must be such a gymnasium."<sup>95</sup>
  
3. The collective plays a major role in developing a sense of duty and a responsible attitude among its members. Makarenko stated in a lecture that he wanted to educate his colonists toward gaining an experience of "living

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<sup>94</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 132; The Road to Life, vol. 1, 218.

<sup>95</sup>Werke, vol. I, 698-99.

through" their responsibility.<sup>96</sup> Life and work in the collective offered numerous opportunities for such an experience. Every colonist was given the opportunity of taking on ever increasing communal responsibilities.<sup>97</sup>

4. The collective plays a major role in developing self-discipline. Makarenko would no doubt have agreed with the words in a Soviet manual on child care:

It is necessary as early as possible to develop in the young child an active, positive relation to the demands of adults, the desire to act in accordance with these demands, to do that which is necessary. Herein lies the great significance of our efforts in developing conscious self-discipline, indeed its very elements. Every person . . . will better, more quickly, and more joyously fulfill demands and rules

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<sup>96</sup>Werke, vol. V, 249; "Schlussfolgerungen," in PSOW XXXI, 4 (1983): 91.

<sup>97</sup>The range of responsibilities for a colonist within the collective system included: being responsible for one's own work, for the work of others, for younger colonists, particularly within the family structure of the primary detachment, for making decisions within the various organs of the collective such as the Commander's Council, the detachments, the mixed detachment, and the full assembly of all colonists. In a lecture Makarenko remarked: "Not a day passes without there being an opportunity to give one of the commanders some assignment as an exercise in responsibility. . . . Without responsibility there can be no real work. It is as important to demand a responsible attitude to work in industry, to school studies, and to one's duty as a member of a joint team. Take a small matter like going to the bathhouse: even there someone must be put in charge. This personal responsibility must be blended with the responsibility of the whole collective. If this blend is not achieved, if the persons responsible are not in complete harmony with each other, the whole thing may become a game and nothing more." In Problems, 142-43; Werke, vol. V, 219-220.

once he has a desire to do so.<sup>98</sup>

In Makarenko's eyes, the educational success of a collective was measured and evaluated by the degree to which a colonist actively participated in the life of the collective, by the degree to which the individual identified with the aims and interests of the collective, and ultimately with the aims and interests of the larger collective of Soviet society. Makarenko believed that a collective was truly Soviet only when complete harmony prevailed between personal and collective aims, ultimately between personal and societal aims.<sup>99</sup> He frequently repeated that only the collective was the educator of the child. Most relevant to this notion is a paragraph from his article, "Pedagogues Shrug Their Shoulders" (not previously translated into English):

We [Makarenko] have been removing such educational efforts that have been focussing especially on the individual child to make--above all--our influence upon the person much more diverse. We are of the opinion that the influence of one single individual upon another single individual is a far too narrow and confining factor. . . . We are convinced that the most genuine form of [educational] work is achieved by the individual's integration into the collective.<sup>100</sup>

Makarenko regarded the educational collective for children and youth not as an isolated "pedagogical arrival" to prepare children for some future existence, but as a

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<sup>98</sup>Bronfenbrenner, Two Worlds of Childhood, 12.

<sup>99</sup>Werke, vol. V, 215.

<sup>100</sup>Werke, vol. II, 441; Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 217.

fully qualified manifestation of Soviet life and society.<sup>101</sup> He wanted to bring, as Rüttenauer stated, the life of Soviet society into his educational collective.<sup>102</sup>

Makarenko repeatedly stated that he did not believe in the educational relationship of educator/student. In his words, "We cannot derive our educational methods from the concept of the pair 'educator plus pupil,' but only from the concept of the organization of the school and the collective."<sup>103</sup> Thus the question of the role of the educator within the collective commands further examination.

#### The Collective of Educators, and the Educator's Role in the Collective.

Contrary to what had existed in bourgeois society, the educator's role, according to Makarenko, should now extend beyond classroom instruction.<sup>104</sup> The educator's role embraced every detail of the colonist's daily life. He or she was assigned to two or three detachments and their task was to become thoroughly familiar with the composition of those detachments, with the life and individuality of each

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<sup>101</sup>Werke, vol. II, 442; Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 218.

<sup>102</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 193.

<sup>103</sup>Werke, vol. V, 238.

<sup>104</sup>Makarenko distinguished between "educator" and "teacher." He perceived the educator's role as one of "upbringer," the teacher's role as one of giving classroom instruction. Makarenko speaks to this point in his lecture, "Methods of Individual Approach," in Werke, vol. V, 182-83; Problems, 103-04.

member, with their aspirations, qualms, weaknesses, and virtues. The educator, so Makarenko advocated, must keep a diary, recording "various observations of a student, events that were characteristic of a pupil, conversations with a colonist and the student's progress, also the appearance of a crisis or a regression in the students development."<sup>105</sup> The educator should be particularly interested in such "intimate phenomena" that from an "official" point of view were difficult to detect. For the educator to be "allowed" to work specifically in "this direction," he or she should not give the impression of being a supervisor; the educator had no right to make demands on the colonists or give commands. This was the function of the detachment's commander. Makarenko was convinced that the educator could gain his detachment's and the colonist's full confidence only if he was free of formal administrative and supervisory duties.<sup>106</sup>

The educator also had to gain full knowledge of his students' physical, psychological, intellectual, and behavioral characteristics. These are enumerated in Makarenko's manual Methods of Organizing the Educational Process. Never should the educator regard the student as an

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<sup>105</sup>Werke, vol. V, 93.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 94.

object of study but always as an equal human being.<sup>107</sup> Makarenko held that from these premises all forms of interaction between the educator and his charges would naturally derive.

On his first encounter with the student, the educator was to set his goal of educating his young charge to becoming a cultivated Soviet citizen who was competent, educated, effective, and politically schooled. This aim was never to be forgotten and to attain it, the educator had to remain in close contact with his charge at all times. By giving practical help, counsel and guidance, the educator was to guide the student forward on the path toward reaching this goal. However, the educator was never to reveal to students his or her educational intentions; he or she should also refrain from moral admonitions or "endless talks" on the value of education.

For Soviet education to be truly a pedagogy, the educator was to meet his or her charges not in the role of an educator "by profession" but as a member of the collective, in what Makarenko termed "parallel action." Similarly, the educator was to view his pupils not as former delinquents but as members of the collective. In the event of disciplinary difficulties, the educator was not to engage

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<sup>107</sup>Werke, vol. V, 96; see also The Road to Life, vol. 1, 28; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 18. "I chose a way which was dangerous for myself, but it was a human, not a bureaucratic way."

in direct confrontation with the culprit, but use the principle of parallel action by mobilizing the entire detachment to create a climate of disapproval, thus indirectly intervening or, as Makarenko recommended, dealing with the problem from within life and the entire community.<sup>108</sup>

The value or success of the educator's work was not measured by the number of hours he spent with pupils but by the tone amongst the students, by the psychological climate within the detachment, by the success of the detachment's work and/or production performance and by the quality of their mutual relationship.<sup>109</sup>

Based on his experience, Makarenko concluded that no educator had the right to educate according to his or her own opinion. To educate a collective of children and youth, a unified group, or in socialist terms, a collective of educators was decisive. Makarenko was convinced that children in a collective could not be brought up by educators who did not follow a uniform work plan, a unified tone, and a consistent approach. He said:

Therefore it is better to have five weak educators who are united in a collective and inspired by the same ideas, who represent the same principles, who work unified in the same style, than to have . . . ten good educators who each work according to their own

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<sup>108</sup>Werke, vol. V, 97-98.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 102.

opinion.<sup>110</sup>

Makarenko urged that a collective of educators had to be carefully composed; it had to consist of a certain number of seasoned veterans. It also had to "absolutely" include a young girl, newly graduated from a pedagogical institute, who would have to rely on the old pedagogues and students as role models; they, in turn, had to take on the responsibility for her daily work. Makarenko felt that there had to be a balance between male and female educators, between cheerful and morose individuals; there had to be "at least one witty fellow."<sup>111</sup> Makarenko stated that the outer appearance of a pedagogue was "most important" and that at least one beautiful male and female had to be included. Evidently, the question of the proper composition of the collective was very important to Makarenko, for he said, "For our future pedagogy a book must be written on the principles of building a collective of educators."<sup>112</sup>

Makarenko maintained that educating was the most difficult and the most responsible task, demanding from an individual much energy and great abilities. "Besides", he said, "the educator himself has to be educated."<sup>113</sup> Based on his experience in the Gorky Colony, Makarenko had a clear

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<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 184.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 187.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 182.



idea of how an educator had to be trained. He did not think educating necessarily required any particular talent but that it could be learned like any other skill. "I am convinced that teaching a person to bring up youngsters is as easy as teaching him arithmetic, say, or reading, or operating a lathe."<sup>114</sup> He claimed that teaching an educator consisted of three things: character training, training in proper conduct, and priming in the specific capabilities "without which no single educator could work."<sup>115</sup> According to this view, a good educator had to know how to use his voice and how to speak to youngsters. Personal training was essential. Educators who could not control their facial expressions or voice were no good. Educators had to understand how to walk, to joke, to look happy or angry. They had to act in such a way that every movement would be educative. Makarenko stated:

I am convinced that in future our teachers' colleges will introduce such compulsory subjects as voice training, posture, control of one's movements and facial expression, otherwise I cannot imagine a tutor coping with his task. Tutors need to have their voices trained not merely to sing beautifully or speak, but to express their thoughts and feelings with the utmost precision, authority and imperiousness. All these are matters of educational [pedagogical] technique.

For instance, you must know in what tone of voice to give a scolding, how far your anger or indignation may be shown, what right you have to show it at all, and if you do--in what way. All this is, in fact,

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 183; Problems, 104.

<sup>115</sup>Werke, vol. V, 183; Problems, 104.

education.<sup>116</sup>

In his lectures and writings, Makarenko returned again and again to what he called pedagogical technique or pedagogical mastership. In "Lectures and Essays on Family Education" he wrote, "Voice training, facial expression, the ability to stand up or sit down in the right manner, all that is very, very important for a pedagogue. Every tiny thing is of great significance."<sup>117</sup> In the lecture "On My Experience" he stated that he considered himself a master only after he had learned to say "come here" in fifteen to twenty different shades of expression, after he understood to give twenty nuances to his facial expression, his posture and his voice.<sup>118</sup> He conceded that he reached such perfection only after having turned to an experienced actor for lessons in acting and voice training.<sup>119</sup> To his audience Makarenko advised employing an actor to school their voices, for "Our voice is after all an instrument in our work that must be sharpened."<sup>120</sup> A good educator, so Makarenko insisted, would show this mastership every step of the way; in fact, one's educational posture would be of significance even when no one was looking.

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<sup>116</sup>Problems, 104; Werke, vol. V, 183.

<sup>117</sup>Werke, vol. IV, 527.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., vol V, 278.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., vol. IV, 526.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., vol. V, 303.

### Makarenko's Pedagogical Categories

In his lecture to educators, entitled "On My Experience," (1938) Makarenko described his experiences in education as "rather peculiar" and to be understood only as a stimulus. He explained that although his ideas had been shaped by his teaching experiences, he might think otherwise had these experiences been different. He asked his listeners to keep in mind the following reservations:

Please do not regard my words as a recipe, a law, a final conclusion! . . . I am still . . . in a stage of searching and becoming. . . . What I am presenting to you are not final conclusions. . . . Please allow me . . . to talk to you about my hypotheses or intuitions; for what I have to tell you are rather intuitions than conclusions.<sup>121</sup>

This qualification must also be kept in mind when examining Makarenko's basic pedagogical ideas. It is important to point out that Makarenko did not use the term "category" in his lectures or writings. This expression has been employed in the secondary literature to classify his educational methods. Makarenko did give some uncommon names to certain of his educational methods: "perspectives," and "evolution and explosion." I have chosen to arrange Makarenko's educational methods in the following categories:

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<sup>121</sup>Werke, vol. V, 260.

(1) labor and schooling; (2) perspectives; (3) evolution and explosion.

## Labor and Schooling

### Labor

Both the Gorky Colony and the Dzerzhinsky Commune were originally conceived as labor colonies, offering their pupils work and school instruction. In both institutions, Makarenko divided the school day into halves, one half for productive labor activities, and the other for formal classroom instruction. In writings and lectures, Makarenko's descriptions of his labor activities move, as Rüttenauer put it, "center stage," leaving the impression that he "always concerned himself with the tasks outside the school, leaving the jobs of formal instruction to the teachers." Rüttenauer asserts that the reason behind Makarenko's interest in labor was the fact that he was gaining new educational insights in this domain, whereas he was already familiar with classroom instruction from his prerevolutionary teaching.<sup>122</sup>

Makarenko was emphatically opposed to the view held by the Ukrainian Narkompros (the Ukrainian People's Commissariat of Education) that school and production had to be coordinated. "I don't consider myself an incompetent

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<sup>122</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 225; Bowen, Soviet Education, 86.

pedagogue, but I do not know how to co-ordinate."<sup>123</sup> In his last lecture, given two days before his death, Makarenko made fun of the outdated requirement to coordinate school and productive labor:

You surely remember the mistaken belief that the labor process had to be combined with the syllabus. How did we rack our brains! There the children produced a stool, and that had to be connected to geography and mathematics (Laughter). I felt quite sick when a commission arrived that mourned over [my] failure of connecting the stool with the Russian language (Laughter). I would give a waiving signal and openly declare that there was absolutely nothing to connect.<sup>124</sup>

Makarenko wanted to keep labor and classroom instruction completely separate believing that each sphere had its own pedagogical principles. Besides, his main educational interests lay in the area of child upbringing and Makarenko regarded labor as part of upbringing. Rüttenauer contends that in no other aspect of his pedagogical work did Makarenko experience such sweeping developments than in labor education.<sup>125</sup> However, to his surprise, Makarenko discovered that "labor per se," had no educational effect on the working pupil. Accepted concepts about the "educational role" of labor in upbringing did not correspond with his own observations.<sup>126</sup> Makarenko came to

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<sup>123</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 238; Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 124; Werke, vol. V, 213.

<sup>124</sup>Werke, vol. V, 321.

<sup>125</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 225.

<sup>126</sup>Werke, vol. V, 196, 115.

the conclusion that labor was of educational significance only when it resulted in a labor product of value to society. What experiences led him to this conclusion?<sup>127</sup>

During the beginning years of the Gorky Colony, in the 1920s, Makarenko, essentially in response to compelling economic need, experimented with three different types of work activities. One of these was known as samoobsluzhivanie or self-service, such work as cleaning and maintaining one's rooms, washing dishes, chopping wood, and other tasks that met the requirements of daily living. Because samoobsluzhivanie was the pedagogical panacea "at that time," Makarenko placed great hope in its educational value. His faith was soon shaken due to the limited challenge that unskilled labor provided. Seeing the inability of ordinary labor to educate and build character, Makarenko commented:

I had to admit that labor as such, without stress, without social and collective concern proved to be but a small factor in the developing of new motivation of behavior. A small gain was seen only in that work absorbed time and produced some beneficial tiredness. A constant rule one noticed that the best working colonists were at the same time more resistant to moral influence.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup>For this discussion, I will draw primarily on "Auf holprigen Wegen der Erziehung," [Along bumpy roads to education] in Werke, vol. I, 690; and "Arbeitserziehung, Beziehungen, Stil und Ton im Kollektiv" [Work training, relations, style and tone], lecture four of his lecture cycle Problems of Soviet School Education, in Werke, vol. V, 195-231, and Problems, 117-154.

<sup>128</sup>Werke, vol. I, 691; I used in part Lehrman's translation, in "The Pedagogical Ideas," 155; see also Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 226-27.

Makarenko added that the neutrality of the labor process astonished the teachers. "We had been used to revere the principle of labor. It now seemed necessary to carefully verify our old convictions."<sup>129</sup>

In searching for more complicated and challenging work, Makarenko came across the workshops. By years end (1921) the colony had established a smithy, a joinery, a cobbleshop, a wheelwright shop, and a basket-making shop. Because each colonist had to assume responsibility for his product, Makarenko found work in the shops to be of greater character-forming value. At the same time this work had negative aspects. It did not lead to strong social bonds nor did it stimulate or improve social motivation. Instead he found that the workshops promoted petty bourgeois instincts; each boy wanted to possess his own workshop and they were envious of one another. Makarenko concluded that labor in the shops was poor in social content and unsuited for communist upbringing.<sup>130</sup>

It was in agricultural work that Makarenko saw the moral attitudes of his colonists improve, at least to the degree that agriculture developed and the goals of the collective penetrated this sphere of work. In agricultural work too, Makarenko found that he had to dispel the myth that "nature ennobles." He remarked that this thesis had

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<sup>129</sup>Werke, vol. I, 691.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., 692-93.

evolved in "the nests" of the landed gentry. He wrote:

Nature, which was supposed to ennoble the Gorky colonist, confronted him with unplowed earth, with thorns and weeds to pull, manure to gather, then carried to the fields and scattered, with a broken cart, with the broken leg of a horse that had to be attended. What sort of ennoblement was in this?<sup>131</sup>

The pedagogical value of agriculture was, according to Makarenko, not to be seen in the ennobling effects of contact with nature but in the fact that the colonists took full responsibility for their work and were lords of their farms, without a "gracious" lord over them. Makarenko found that the concentrated efforts of the collective and its conscious striving created a morally healthy foundation in the colony.<sup>132</sup>

Whereas the Gorky Colony used agricultural work and farming as its primary form of labor, the Dzerzhinsky Commune went into industrial production. (See chapter five.) In his lecture "Labor Education," Makarenko delineated his new experiences with productive labor and his conclusions concerning industrial productive labor as a fundamental factor in character formation and education. He had to come to terms with two emerging issues, those of wages and the division of labor, by examining their effect on the educational role of productive labor.

Unlike his supervisors at the Dzerzhinsky Commune,

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid., 694.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 696.



Makarenko was against paying wages to the communards. He regarded wages as a form of immediate gratification that would ruin a "quiet, balanced enthusiasm" for the collective's more distant perspectives. He held this "quiet enthusiasm" as pedagogically more valuable than intensifying the communard's interest in labor through pay. Though Makarenko had to give in on the wage issue, he maintained his conviction that in a well-run collective, the same results are achieved without salary.<sup>133</sup>

When the production manager of the Dzerzhinsky Commune instituted a "division of labor" method--for functional not pedagogical reasons--Makarenko had "grave doubts." Eventually he became convinced that rigorously dividing manual labor into single small steps was "useful." He stated in his lecture:

To ceaselessly watch the same manual motion is a depressing sight; however if one looks at it [the division of labor] for some time one realizes that there is nothing dreadful about. Each of the boys and girls performs one operation for some time which is hardly learning a skill. However after a few years, after the pupil has become practiced in many different operations . . . he really becomes a highly skilled joiner, a worker, who is needed in large social production.<sup>134</sup>

Makarenko observed that this production process, in all its many aspects, had a favorable effect on the pupil's character, as it fostered exactitude, precise movements, meticulous work habits, conscientiousness, and a responsible

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<sup>133</sup>Ibid., vol. V, 196-98; 209.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 203; Problems, 126.

attitude. Makarenko observed that these capabilities were never lost on a pupil; long after students left the commune, he found them mirrored in their professional attitudes. Makarenko told his audience that he could not imagine any form of work education outside of industrial production. In his words: "Today I am convinced that labor which does not aim to produce values is not a positive element in upbringing."<sup>135</sup> Rüttenauer comments that production assumes its legitimate place in Makarenko's education of the new Soviet man by assigning full responsibility to the individual to do his "best performance" in a way that not only benefits himself, but also his comrades and the entire plant. "Makarenko sees the genuine educational value of labor in production in the call for assuming collective responsibility."<sup>136</sup> In a summarizing comment she concludes that Makarenko opposed the view that the labor process in itself had educational value because it fostered desirable skills and behaviors; instead, Makarenko believed that responsible participation in production constituted the educational value of labor.<sup>137</sup>

### Schooling

As previously stated, Makarenko made a distinction

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<sup>135</sup>Werke, vol. V, 197; Problems, 119.

<sup>136</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 233.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 234.

between "upbringing" and schooling, meaning schooling in the sense of classroom instruction. In his lecture "Methods of Upbringing" (January 1938) he spoke to this distinction:

And now, a few words about the very character of my practical, pedagogical logic. I came to certain conclusions. . . . [that] may sound strange to some of you, but I have ample supporting evidence to tell you about them. . . . I maintain that the science of upbringing, I mean pure upbringing, is a separate field, quite distinct from teaching methods.<sup>138</sup>

Because he was expected to reform so-called juvenile delinquents, give them a moral education and, above all, remold their character, Makarenko distinguished early between upbringing and classroom instruction. Though he initially believed that labor education was the most important thing to accomplish, it did not take him long to become convinced that school was a "powerful vehicle of moral education."<sup>139</sup> Speaking from experience, Makarenko claimed that upbringing and teaching methods were two independent branches of pedagogy, but they should be "linked organically," meaning that while schooling was part of upbringing, upbringing extended beyond schooling. "To reduce upbringing to book learning" was, as mentioned earlier, inconceivable to Makarenko.

In his reference manual, Methods for Organization of the Education Process, (1935) Makarenko expounded the value of classroom teaching and the character-shaping aspect of

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<sup>138</sup>Problems, 29; Werke, vol. V, 110-111.

<sup>139</sup>Problems, 30-31; Werke, vol. V, 112.

schooling.

The systematic acquisition of fundamental knowledge in school . . . determine man's path in life. It is also necessary for the right development of character . . . [because] man's destiny is significantly shaped by it. [by the acquisition of fundamental knowledge]<sup>140</sup>

In the fourth lecture of the cycle Problems of Soviet School Education (1938) Makarenko gave even greater emphasis to the importance of formal schooling within the context of upbringing. He contended that a juvenile delinquent could be reformed only after having received a full secondary school education.<sup>141</sup> Makarenko considered the student's attitude toward school-learning to be of great importance, warranting the full attention of the educator. During his last lecture, "From my Work Experience," given two days before his death, he recalled the enormous difficulties pupils at the Gorky Colony and the Dzerzhinsky Commune initially had with schoolwork and learning because they were significantly delayed in reading and writing. As a teacher, Makarenko had followed the conventional school syllabus, applying what was known as the "complex" method (see chapters one and five). Yet, Makarenko recognized that the children had something at their disposal that enabled

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<sup>140</sup>Werke, vol. V, 99.

<sup>141</sup>Problems, 136; Werke, vol. V, 213. Rüttenauer observes that a full secondary school education was a major demand, as this signified a ten-year school, which, by its structure and by authorizing the student to enter higher education, was akin to a high school in Western countries, in Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 234.

them to overcome great difficulties: unlike children who had parental help, Makarenko's students had to rely on themselves and their own efforts. Soon, they realized that schooling was the way that led to higher education, a path that promised to be flexible and interesting. Makarenko noticed that the colonists' zeal for learning was much stronger than among average students, and that this zest helped in overcoming lethargy and difficulties.<sup>142</sup>

Makarenko believed that participating in a highly developed production system and completing a ten-year school training would be successful in creating the new Soviet man. The more production and schooling followed their intrinsic principles, the more effective they would be in the process of upbringing. One point, also made by Rüttenauer, is worth mentioning here. Makarenko arranged the production work not according to pedagogical principles but according to the actual requirements of society, namely those of economic need. Likewise, schooling was not tuned to the individual needs of the child but to the needs of society. Thus, in Rüttenauer's words, Makarenko relinquished giving education "its own domain."<sup>143</sup>

### Perspectives

According to Rüttenauer, Makarenko used the term

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<sup>142</sup>Werke, vol. V, 320.

<sup>143</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 239-40.

perspective (in Russian perspektiva) in the sense of a planned event offering positive prospects for the future.<sup>144</sup> In his "Poem" (The Road to Life), Makarenko explained:

Man cannot live on earth without beholding something joyful. The true stimulus in human life is the joy for tomorrow.<sup>145</sup>

Makarenko, in working with the colonists, found that looking forward with joy to the next day gave a vital stimulus to the lives of forlorn and deprived youth and that this joy epitomized one of the most important objectives in pedagogical work.<sup>146</sup> In his "Poem" (The Road to Life) he asserted that, first of all, joy had to be organized; it had to be called into being and treated as a reality. Following this, simple forms of joy were to steadily be transformed into more intricate and meaningful forms. "Here runs an interesting line: from the primitive gratification provided by a piece of gingerbread to the satisfaction based upon the deepest sense of duty."<sup>147</sup> Makarenko argued that a whole methodology could be written about the organization of joy, about this "exceedingly complicated system of collective

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<sup>144</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 241-242.

<sup>145</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 170; The Road to Life, vol. 3, 283.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

<sup>147</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 170; The Road to Life, vol. 3, 283-84.

perspectives."<sup>148</sup> It would consist in making full use of perspectives already in existence, organizing new perspectives, and gradually replacing inferior perspectives with more virtuous ones. He spoke of this progression:

A beginning can be made with a good dinner, a visit to the circus, or cleaning the pond, but the perspectives affecting the whole collective must be created and gradually widened, and brought to the point where they become the perspectives of the Soviet Union itself.<sup>149</sup>

Makarenko certainly wrote extensively about this "important work." The theme of the perspektiva weaves through his writings and in Methods for Organization of the Education Process he assigned an entire chapter to this topic.<sup>150</sup> The perspective, as Froese points out, gains such importance in Makarenko's work and is enlarged to such a degree that one can speak with certainty of a "system of perspectives."<sup>151</sup>

In the following section, this system of perspectives will be examined. Makarenko distinguishes between a near, a middle, and a distant perspective. Essentially, the near perspectives embody the immediate gratification of physical comforts and of things that are personally pleasant. In the colony's early days this meant food, shelter, warmth,

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<sup>148</sup>Werke, vol. I, 602.

<sup>149</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 284-85; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 170.

<sup>150</sup>Werke, vol. V, 79-87.

<sup>151</sup>Froese, Triebkräfte, 243.

cleanliness, and a sense of protection. Makarenko found that typically the near perspectives were most important to the young children who needed the immediate gratification of something pleasant. He found that entering colonists were used to another kind of near perspective such as burglary, drinking, gambling, or terrifying weaker colonists, and that the conflict between old and new perspectives demanded his fullest attention. Primitive perspectives had to be replaced with worthier ones such as visits to films and concerts, attending social gatherings, or going on trips and outings. He advised educators that much attention should be given to developing the near perspectives to all children.<sup>152</sup>

The middle perspective might consist in planning a special event or a great feast for the entire collective that was to take place at a later time, in other words, an event that entailed the delay of instant gratification. Makarenko believed that the older students were ready for a more distant perspective. Explaining why the middle perspective was indispensable for the colonists, he wrote that every adult had a remote prospect of something pleasant awaiting him, something to look forward to such as a vacation, a journey, or a career promotion. These special events should not occur too frequently--only two or three in a year--and should be anticipated with great joy. As examples Makarenko cited participation in public festivals,

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<sup>152</sup>Werke, vol. V, 80-81, 84.



the beginning or terminating of the school year, the opening of a new home or workshop, graduation ceremonies, and summer vacations. The colonists should remind each other of this approaching event and think about it every day.

Preparations for the middle perspective, so Makarenko said, should begin well in advance and involve as many colonists as possible. Preparations should include gathering ideas, forming committees, planning programs, procedures, and all the relevant details. Makarenko elaborated on the example of summer vacation:

Summer vacation must be a particularly pleasant and long expected event. It should be viewed not only as recreation but mainly as a nearing perspective. To remove summer vacation would be harmful not because of a deprivation in rest and relaxation but because of the loss of the perspective of joy.<sup>153</sup>

The distant perspective should also be a concern for the entire collective, particularly for the more mature students. The faraway future of their colony or commune, the striving for a better and more cultivated life should eventually become an all-important concern, the anticipated joy. Makarenko emphasized that educating youth toward such a perspective was a major step in the overall political education of the colonist, as this perspective constituted a "natural and practical transition" toward the paramount perspective--the future of the Soviet Union. In his words, "The future of the [Soviet] Union and its progressively

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<sup>153</sup>Ibid., 85.

moving forward--that is the highest stage in the creation of perspectives."<sup>154</sup> Makarenko emphasized that pupils of a soviet children's institution should see their own personal life as part of society's life, as part of society's present and future. Through film and discussion, the pupils should not only know, but feel, that their life and work was an essential part of the work and labor of the Soviet Union. What distinguished Soviet education from bourgeois education, the Soviet man from the bourgeois man, was the fact that in the Soviet system not individual but collective concerns were stimulated and furthered. A person who put collective perspectives before personal perspectives embodied the new man. Finally, a total harmony had to be achieved between personal and collective perspectives, "so that our pupils no longer experience any conflict between the two."<sup>155</sup> Thus, as Feifel points out, Makarenko's educational aim was reached when collective perspectives were turned into personal perspectives.<sup>156</sup>

Makarenko's pronouncement, "To educate man means to create perspectives for him" seems to have both pedagogical and ideological ramifications. The ideological implications

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<sup>154</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., 81.

<sup>156</sup>Erich Feifel, Personale und Kollektive Erziehung [Individual and collective education]. (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1963), 157.

are accented in Methods for Organization of the Education Process. The pedagogical significance of the perspective must be garnered from statements and testimony that appear in Makarenko's belletristic writings. Froese, highlighting some of the pedagogical aspects of Makarenko's perspective, wrote:

The [colonist's] negative experiences of destitution and the joy over the most modest satisfaction was helpful [to them] in recognizing the value of the more important perspectives and the joy over their attainment. . . . Makarenko found this to be fully confirmed in the daily life of the colony. Step by step he succeeded in separating his pupils from the [old] world of neglect and in awakening the responsibility for themselves, for their surrounding and finally for the future, even though one has to admit that relapses recurred. They [the colonists] gave up gambling, drinking and thieving, they enthused in already accomplished or anticipated achievements, and began to build their leisure time. Particularly conspicuous was the progress seen in the colonists' career goals. After they had dismissed the 'ideal' of being a thief and robber, they 'dreamed of a shoemaker's or carpenter's career.' The 'collective's magnificent rise' significantly lifted the colonist's self-esteem, and ' . . . almost effortlessly, we succeeded to replace the humble ideal of shoemaker with the stirring and beautiful sign Rabfac' [a school within the factory system]. In the end, the colonists took it upon themselves to rebuild a home for social education (in Kuryazh).<sup>157</sup>

In his "Poem" (The Road to Life), Makarenko imparted what he judged to be the most joyful perspective when, after a particularly fruitful discussion with his colonists he observed:

The next day I did not know them. Puffing, blowing, and tossing their heads, they made the most conscientious and stupendous efforts to overcome that

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<sup>157</sup>Froese, Triebkräfte, 247-48.

sloth which is man's oldest heritage. They had caught a glimpse of the most joyful perspective of all--the value of human personality.<sup>158</sup>

### Evolution and Explosion

Frequently, in lectures and writings, Makarenko spoke of a pedagogical method that he had employed in his work with the besprizorniki, an approach he called "explosion." For example, during a talk with educators, he described his practice as an inexperienced pedagogue who had tried to approach a delinquent waif in a roundabout way by "talking to him," "analyzing him," "pondering over him."<sup>159</sup> Though the youth, according to Makarenko, appeared to be open to his influence, relapses in stealing or in truancy persisted, and Makarenko had to start all over again. Later on he realized that a direct method, "a frontal attack," one that had an explosive effect, was necessary.<sup>160</sup> In a lecture entitled "On My Experience," Makarenko repeated his conclusion--one of which he was not completely sure--that a change in character could not be brought about gradually, over a long period of time. Though he had observed personalities evolve in the commonly understood sense, he found that a deformed character could only be corrected ("if

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<sup>158</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 287; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 171-72.

<sup>159</sup>Werke, vol. IV, 466.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid.

you will forgive this expression") by an explosive method. Makarenko gave a definition of what he meant by "explosion." I am thinking of a sudden impact that overturns all wishes, all aspirations of an individual."<sup>161</sup>

In an early essay, "On Explosion" (written between 1925 and 1931?), Makarenko stated that in cases of "the most difficult characters, the most wicked setup of habits," a transformation could only be achieved by a "stronger impetus, an explosion, a shake-up."<sup>162</sup> Rüttenauer believes that the origin of Makarenko's explosion method can be traced to a specific moment that Makarenko described in his "Poem." After having slapped Zadorov in the face, Makarenko was amazed at the startling effect that his blow had. (See chapter three for Makarenko's account of how he slipped "on the tightrope of pedagogical practice" by using physical force on one of the colonists who refused to follow his orders).<sup>163</sup> Rüttenauer states:

According to Makarenko's own construction of this incident . . . Zadorov experienced a shock by Makarenko's outburst of anger and slap in the face--he was "terribly frightened"--and subsequently a profound transformation ensued in his overall behavior."<sup>164</sup>

Rüttenauer goes on to say that the transformation in

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<sup>161</sup>Ibid., vol. V, 262.

<sup>162</sup>Ibid., vol. VII, 423.

<sup>163</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 21; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 14.

<sup>164</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 268.

zadorov did not come about through fear or through trying to avoid future punishment, but by the instant recognition produced by the shock of his previous behavior and what was humanly expected of him.<sup>165</sup>

Makarenko had obviously not anticipated such a reaction in Zadorov. After all, his "explosion" had been spontaneous, and as he stated in "On Explosion," this experience became a much pondered issue. Though he had recognized the significance of an explosive moment, he did not feel entitled to "organize such explosions." "I have thought a great deal about this question, a very great deal, because it represents a central question in the learning about re-education."<sup>166</sup> However, in his later writings, Makarenko speaks of events where an explosion was planned and well prepared. Thus, in Rüttenauer's words:

Makarenko, in his pedagogical work, did after all develop a "method of explosion" by applying a means of pedagogical impact--offered to him spontaneously--in ever increasing, an ever aimed fashion.<sup>167</sup>

Drawing on Makarenko's writings, two examples will illustrate what Makarenko meant by the method of explosion:

#### Kuryazh Taken by Storm

In 1926, when for economic and pedagogical reasons Makarenko was in the process of relocating the Gorky Colony

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<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 268.

<sup>166</sup>Werke, vol. VII, 423.

<sup>167</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 273.

from Trepke to a larger site, he wrote to Gorky about a new possibility:

They [the authorities] have offered us the estate of the former monastery Kuryazh. . . . On this estate there is presently a children's colony, from a pedagogical point of view a pit as frightening as I have never seen one in my life. We have agreed to move to this place with our whole belongings under the condition that no more than two hundred of these children remain, and that the entire staff is sent to the devil.<sup>168</sup>

The conditions in Kuryazh, according to Makarenko's description to Gorky, were unimaginable. The youngsters had formed one enormous perverted mass, rummaging in filth, habituated to drinking and swearing. He stated that one could not envision any worse degree of neglect regarding the management of the colony, the education and general care of the children. The children were not used to washing--soap and towels were unknown--there were no lavatories and any form of work and discipline had long since been abandoned.<sup>169</sup>

In preparing for the move, Makarenko set all his hopes on "one single lightening stroke--taking the Kuryazhites by storm."<sup>170</sup> As he pondered the situation, he realized that the slightest delay, any reliance on a "gradual permeation" between the Gorkyites and the Kuryazhites, as the authorities had recommended, would jeopardize the outcome of the entire operation. Makarenko

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<sup>168</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 357.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid., 360.

<sup>170</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 4; The Road to Life, vol. 3, p. 11.

was aware that what would "gradually permeate" would be not only the good traditions of the Gorky Colony but also the Kuryazh anarchy. He knew that the formula of good boys having a positive influence on bad ones could be easily reversed: "The first-rate boys could easily be transformed into little beasts in a collective that was build on a limp organizational structure."<sup>171</sup>

Makarenko charted a detailed plan for the "taking of Kuryazh." The colonists were to stay at Trepke until he, accompanied by an "advanced mixed detachment" and some teachers had gone ahead to "somehow organize their new life." Makarenko wrote to Gorky that he hoped to be successful in infusing some enthusiasm into the Kuryazhites and to sweep them along by his belief in human worth.<sup>172</sup>

On May 30, 1926, Kuryazh was "taken by storm," according to Makarenko's plan.<sup>173</sup> In part three of The Road to Life Makarenko described this risky event, anticipated both eagerly and apprehensively. The Gorky colonists, arriving by train and rapidly drawing up ranks at the station, marched in their usual jubilant fashion toward the Kuryazh colony.

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<sup>171</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol., 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 4; The Road to Life, vol. 3, pp. 11-12.

<sup>172</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol., 1, 360, 359.

<sup>173</sup>G. Hillig, "Der Kampf um Zaporoz'e und die 'Eroberung' von Kurjaz" [The battle of Zaporoz'e and the 'conquest' of Kurjaz], in Hundert Jahre, 87.



We marched six abreast; in front four trumpeters and eight drummers, behind them myself and the commander on duty, Taranets, and after us the glorious brigade. The banner was still in its cover, its gilt tassel floating from its gleaming summit and soaring over Lapot's head. Behind Lopot shone the freshness of white shirts. . . . The only sound was the thunder of the drums awaking a hollow echo which seemed to rebound from the far-off walls of Kuryazh.<sup>174</sup>

The ranks of the Gorkyites moved up the ascending hill, their drums rattling deafeningly while passing under the gate of the monastery's belltower into the courtyard where the Kuryazhites had assembled. As the Gorky columns and the Kuryazh children drew up face to face in opposite lines, the Kuryazhites speechless and, as Makarenko observed, in "sheer bewilderment," he knew that the "taking of Kuryazh" had been victorious.

As my gaze wandered from group to group [of the Kuryazh crowd] I kept encountering fresh expressions, some of them exceedingly unexpected. Very few adopted an indifferent, neutral pose. . . . Most of the younger ones were openly enthusiastic, just as they would have been about a toy which they wanted to get into their hands. Nisinov and Zoren stood with their arms around each other watching the Gorkyites . . . they seemed to be musing, perhaps of the time when they, too, would take their places in these entrancing ranks, admired by "free" little fellows like themselves, sunk into dreaming. . . . Very gradually the malicious countenances [of so many] that had been put on in advance, countenances of mockery and contempt, were dissolving gradually. . . . Many of them were rattled on the spot by the splendid chests and biceps of the Gorkyites in the first rows. . . . Others came into bewilderment only later after it had become all too obvious that even the very smallest of these hundred and

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<sup>174</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol., 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 115; The Road to Life, vol. 3, 195-96.

twenty could not be touched unpunished.<sup>175</sup>

Eventually, the Gorky Colony brought about an amazing transformation in the life of Kuryazh. The shock treatment, as Bowen points out, and the successful absorption of the Kuryazhites was made possible by two features of the Gorky Colony: stupefaction over their appealing appearance--they looked fresh and cheery, in gleaming white shirts, new shorts, and new velvet skullcaps--and the tight in-group structure that made any disruption of ranks extremely difficult.<sup>176</sup>

It must be mentioned that the Marburg researchers, in drawing on new sources from Ukrainian archives, found a less dramatic rendering of the "taking of Kuryazh." In a letter to Gorky, written by the Gorky Colony's second detachment, the matter-of-fact report begins with the words, "We would like to inform you that we moved from Poltava to Kharkov. . . . Anton Semyonovitch had gone to Kuryazh before everyone else in order to take over the colony. After he had taken over the colony he wrote that we should be on our way." A brief description follows of how the colony's farm animals were herded to the train that would take them to Ljubot (near Kharkov in the Ukraine). "When we arrived [in Ljubot], we drew up in ranks and set out for the colony. When we met

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<sup>175</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 118-19; The Road to Life, vol. 3, 200-201.

<sup>176</sup>Bowen, Soviet Education, 115, 120.

with the other colonists, [the Kuryazhites] we were happy and shook hands with each other."<sup>177</sup>

"There go all your Biographies."<sup>178</sup>

In Learning to Live Makarenko described a planned, well-organized event that resulted in a profound behavioral transformation within a group of children as a result of being taken unawares. All at once he had to add fifty new waifs to his well-organized collective at the Dzerzhinsky Commune, which he did. In later lectures, he referred to this incident as a particularly striking example of an explosion. According to Makarenko's description, the new children had to be picked up at the railway station, taken from the roofs of the railway carriages, or seized from between trains. The children, "emitting all varieties of the odor of 'social decay'" were protesting and swearing.<sup>179</sup> In his lecture to a public audience (Moscow 1937), Makarenko related what happened next. Because this critical speech has not previously been translated into English, a full rendering of his report on the explosion is given:

At this moment the [Dzerzhinsky] Commune draws up at the railway station: 500 men in dress uniform, that means white collar, a golden Tjubeteika [round

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<sup>177</sup>Hillig, "Der Kampf um Zaporoz'e," 87-88.

<sup>178</sup>This phrase was coined by Misha Gontar, after the old rags of the new waifs had been burned; see Learning to Live, 200.

<sup>179</sup>Ibid., 199.

shieldless cap], riding breeches, in short, in full regalia. Their posture is magnificent, free, sporting, they march in platoons, headed by a sixty-man orchestra, silver-lustered trumpets, and soaring banners. . . .

They fill the entire train station, leaving enough room for the next train. . . .

The columns march along the train . . . the orchestra thundering in honor of the new arrivals.

The crowds suffer a nervous shock, there are tears; for the delinquents however this is as much as a "pedagogical bludgeon" over their head. What a welcome. . . . [They] march through the whole town . . . and in the middle--the new cortege. . . . They march with earnest countenance, seeing that things are serious.

Without exaggeration--on the sidewalk women weep. It must be like this, one needs the shake-up.

They arrive at the commune, a bath, haircut--this lasts one hour. . . .

The last act is the burning of residues of the past. All clothing is doused with petroleum and ignited. Then the caretaker sweeps it all together; nonetheless, I say, "This ash here is all that is left of your former life." A glorious sight, without any pomp; already one jokes and laughs.<sup>180</sup>

Makarenko reported that after this ceremony of the flames, working days took their normal course. The newcomers gave no trouble either to him or to the collective.

In his lecture "On My Experience" (1938) Makarenko proclaimed that he became convinced step by step that the method of explosion ("I cannot think of a better expression") was promising.<sup>181</sup> He cautioned however that not

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<sup>180</sup>Werke, vol. V, 379-80.

<sup>181</sup>Ibid., 262. The Soviet editors of this volume commented that in appraising Makarenko's "method of explosion" one had to take into consideration the fact that Makarenko applied this method to re-education. They explained that in a properly organized pedagogical program, the "correcting of character" was no longer necessary: consequently, the scope of the "explosion method" was smaller, in Werke, vol. V, 527.

all conflicts could be resolved by an explosion. If this was the case, the entire life of the collective would be transformed into an "unbroken chain of detonations, a nervous fever" making for little sense. He explained that he had chosen only the most blatant, the most conspicuous situations of conflict to be resolved by an explosion.

Makarenko pointed to the risk of applying this method:

Whoever is stricken by the momentum of explosion is of course in a difficult and dangerous situation . . . the receiver literally stands at the brink of the abyss, fated to crash at the least clumsy movement. In this lies the definitely dangerous moment of the entire explosive operation, one that must repel all disciples to the evolutionary approach. . . . It must be openly stated that the entire explosion tactic is a most painful and pedagogically demanding undertaking.<sup>182</sup>

Makarenko justified using this method by likening it to a physician who must immediately operate on an ulcer to prevent a patient's death.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup>Werke, vol. VII, 425, 426.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid., 426.

### Makarenko's Educational Values

An examination of Makarenko's concerns as an educator has shown that his primary striving was not directed toward students' learning achievements or scholarly excellence, but toward their moral upbringing and character formation. His educational values focused on developing a worthy character and moral virtue. Makarenko was convinced that optimal personality development could not occur within the classroom but only within the organized life of a collective. As Elizabeth Cagan points out, "It is, indeed, the shaping of a moral character which most accurately represents the intention of collectivist education."<sup>184</sup> In summary, Makarenko viewed education fundamentally as a process of character and personality development that could only fully be realized within the context of a collective; only in the collective could the individual achieve his or her full potential.

In lectures and writings, Makarenko frequently stressed the significance of communist education being something entirely new in the world. He felt there was a

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<sup>184</sup>Elizabeth Cagan, "Individualism, Collectivism, and Radical Educational Reform." Harvard Educational Review 48 (May 1978), 236.

profound difference between the prerevolutionary and Bolshevik pedagogy, stating, "We are not only new but on principle different."<sup>185</sup> Because the characteristics of the new Soviet man were to be radically different from those of the bourgeois, Soviet education too had to differ fundamentally. In Makarenko's words, "We must educate the citizen of the Soviet Union . . . who is worthy of this epoch."<sup>186</sup> Makarenko emphasized that communist conduct and morality required new norms and new terminology; the dividing line between good and evil had to be drawn "absolutely anew." One month before his death he wrote, "the logical axis of our moral code can, in no way, be [represented by] the isolated person who exhibits indifference vis-à-vis social appearances. Our actions may only be measured in terms of the collective and the collective person's interests."<sup>187</sup> He made the point that unlike the study of literature and technology, where the heritage of previous generations continues to provide a foundation, in education everything must be rethought. He felt himself to be a pioneer in mapping an altogether new communist education.

Makarenko's educational values did not rest solely on the overriding goal of bringing up an authentic Soviet

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<sup>185</sup>Werke, vol. VII, 187.

<sup>186</sup>Werke, vol. V, 360.

<sup>187</sup>Ibid., 360; 427-28.

man, possessing exemplary moral conduct. Many of his values arose from an enthusiastic confidence in human beings and their moral and social propensities. In Robert S. Cohen's words: "Equipped with courage and an unbelievable faith in the human material, and with a fortunate ignorance of advanced thinking about "delinquents," he proceeded to demonstrate the potential ability and goodness of the young."<sup>188</sup>

As to moral upbringing and character education, Makarenko provided the world with some unusual ideas regarding conduct, punishment, and discipline. The following excerpts, selected from his lectures and writings, many of which have not been previously translated into English, illustrate pertinent thoughts and feelings about core educational values. They demonstrate his conviction that not prerevolutionary values, but only what he believed to be genuinely Soviet values, had merit for future Soviet upbringing. In examining Makarenko's educational values, which essentially center around character education, it becomes evident that he made exceptional demands on both teachers and students, using punishment and discipline in what to him were new ways to develop moral character and ethical conduct. Yet Makarenko was much more than a

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<sup>188</sup>Robert S. Cohen, On the Marxist Philosophy of Education. The 54th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 208.



demanding and austere disciplinarian. The format used to present these ideas is modelled on Robert Cohen's discussion of Makarenko in his article, "On the Marxist Philosophy of Education."<sup>189</sup>

On Makarenko's view of the human being:

(a) [Concerning Makarenko's view of the delinquent.] I realize there are no delinquents but rather people who have fallen upon hardship. . . . Any normal child in the streets, lacking any help, outside society, outside a community, without friends or experience, with frayed nerves, any normal child in such conditions would become delinquent. . . . There are no delinquents but there are people no less endowed than I, with no less a right than I to a happy life, talented, capable of living and working, capable of happiness and creative work. With this realized there ceased to be a problem of reeducation. I had the ordinary task of bringing up boys and girls to be real Soviet people, people of exemplary behavior.<sup>190</sup>

(b) [In a letter to Gorky: A declaration of our basic principle.] There is nothing higher than man.<sup>191</sup>

Makarenko was guided by an unrestricted and unshakable faith in mankind and by feelings of compassion for the destiny of those youth under his care. He refused to view any of the children as disturbed or delinquent. This orientation enabled him to meet his pupils without preconceptions and to recognize the true abilities and intrinsic worth of each of them. It seems noteworthy that Makarenko converted these beliefs into guiding principles

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<sup>189</sup>Cohen, On the Marxist Philosophy of Education, 207-212.

<sup>190</sup>Werke, vol. V, 433. I have used the translation given by Cohen, 209.

<sup>191</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 369.

and that he applied these in his daily life as a teacher. Makarenko firmly believed that maintaining a positive image of the human being was important for teachers, as such a positive outlook would have a beneficial effect on their relationships with students. (Many Western educators have expressed similar beliefs).

On Makarenko's fundamental principle in education:

(a) [Concerning Makarenko's most important motto, stated in numerous lectures and writings.] My fundamental principle has always been: the utmost possible demands on a person, but at the same time the utmost possible respect for him. One cannot demand great things of someone whom one does not respect. . . . If this principle was followed everywhere in educational work, then we could observe how educational work would begin to assume firm and clear forms of organization.<sup>192</sup>

(b) The higher you stand, the more is demanded of you.<sup>193</sup>

Makarenko was a demanding teacher. In fact, he believed that upbringing without making demands was inconceivable. This belief seems to imply the recognition that insufficiently challenged students would probably not develop their true potentials. Makarenko stated that his guiding principle conjoined a demanding posture with an attitude of respect for his students. He explained that one would not make demands on someone whom one does not respect.

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<sup>192</sup>Makarenko, cited by Cohen, On the Marxist Philosophy of Education, 211. See also A. S. Makarenko in "Schlussfolgerungen," PSOW XXXI, 4 (1983): 82; Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 376; Werke, vol. VII, 326; vol. V, 150; Problems, 70.

<sup>193</sup>Werke, vol. V, 149; Problems, 70.

It seems to the writer that Makarenko's experience applying this guiding principle suggests that teachers, in making demands on students, concomitantly convey their respect for and belief in the dignity of the student.

On the importance of making demands on others and on ourselves:

(a) Our society differs from bourgeois society in that we place much higher demands upon a person than does bourgeois society, and our demands are more far reaching besides. In bourgeois society a person may open a shop, he may exploit others, he may go in for speculation, or to be a rentier. There, many fewer demands are placed upon a person than in our society.

But on the other hand, we treat him with incomparably greater and basically different respect. This combination of the most exacting demands with the utmost respect for a person are part and parcel of the same thing--they are not two different things. By placing demands on a person we show our respect for his strength and abilities, and by showing respect for him we make demands on him at the same time.<sup>194</sup>

(b) But I insist that there can be no upbringing if no demands are made.<sup>195</sup>

(c) Should someone ask what I would do first in a normal school, my answer would be: I would begin with a good, full school assembly where I would tell the children straight out, first, what I want of them, second, what I demand of them, and, third, I would predict how far they will have advanced within two years. I am convinced, that a good, matter-of-fact, energetic mandate, placed at the right time, will be of enormous significance to the children. . . . One has to be able to communicate it in such a way that they can feel in your words your will, your culture, your personality. This must be mastered.<sup>196</sup>

(d) What counts in Soviet ethics is a firm system of demands on people, and only this will result in the fact

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<sup>194</sup>Problems, 71; Werke, vol. V, 150.

<sup>195</sup>Problems, 72; Werke, vol. V, 151.

<sup>196</sup>"Schlussfolgerungen," in PSOW XXXI,4 (1983): 92.

that we, first of all, can develop demands on ourselves. That is the most difficult--these demands on ourselves. . . . It is easy to make demands on others; in the case of oneself there is again and again a resistance, one always wants to find excuses for oneself.<sup>197</sup>

Makarenko had developed a structured approach to making demands of his students. He recommended that teachers clearly state their demands and expectations to pupils. He explained that once students have gained the experience of responding to demands made by their teachers, they will be more capable of acting on demands which they make of themselves.

On conduct:

a) I am of the opinion that every Soviet pedagogy, every Soviet person must demand a normal behavior of every normal Soviet citizen and child. . . . I believe that this must be a rule of true Soviet pedagogy--the unbending, clear, direct, categorical demand.<sup>198</sup>

(b) I have several times observed how the communards [members of the Dzerzhinsky Commune] behave themselves in the streetcar. There sits a communard. He does not see me. I notice that someone has boarded. The communard gets up quietly so that no one will notice, stands by the side, and nobody has noticed. This, comrades, is a good, a beautiful performance. To do something out of himself, for the sake of an idea, a principle, that is quite hard, and learning to act like this is difficult.<sup>199</sup>

(c) I remind you of an incident in Moscow during a fire. A young man who happened to ride by in a streetcar noticed on the fourth floor a young girl, climbed up, rescued the girl and disappeared. No one knew how to find him. You see, this is an ideal behavior. A behavior that comes from the

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<sup>197</sup>Werke, vol. V, 445.

<sup>198</sup>"Schlussfolgerungen," in PSOW XXXI, 4 (1983): 82.

<sup>199</sup>Werke, vol. V, 442-43.

right idea.<sup>200</sup>

(d) Man must not behave correctly only as long as someone can see him, hear him, or praise him. . . . It is very difficult to act appropriately when no one sees us, no one hears us . . . when no one would ever find out about it. Then it is necessary to act exemplary, for the sake of ourselves, for the sake of truth, for the responsibility that we have in regard to ourselves.<sup>201</sup>

(e) [With regard to persistently perfecting our conduct and positive character traits.] It is a widespread belief that man must have both superior character traits and faults. I hold that there must not be any faults. And if you have twenty excellent qualities and ten faults, then we must press hard upon you. Why do you have these ten faults? Away with five. When five are left, away with two; let three be left over. Actually, one must demand, demand, and again demand of people.<sup>202</sup>

Makarenko had observed that people generally conducted themselves well as long as they were observed by others, and that, when not observed, followed their own self-interest. He believed that good conduct is in the best interest of the whole community, and that it should ideally derive from the volition of individuals caring for each other.

On egoism:

(a) When visiting a colony . . . I noticed how one exited the theatre. Everyone bumped into each other, and no one could get out. If you like, I said, I can show you how one must leave the theatre. It just took you twenty minutes to exit . . . try to follow my advice and you will be out in five minutes. It is quite simple: If you want to leave,

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<sup>200</sup>Ibid., 443.

<sup>201</sup>Ibid., 309.

<sup>202</sup>Werke, vol. V, 444.

you make way for someone else. And in fact, it worked.<sup>203</sup>

(b) The old logic was "I want to become a happy person; the others don't concern me." The new logic goes "I want to become a happy person; the surest way of attaining this goal is when I act in such a way that others are happy. Then I too will be happy." All our actions must contain the thought of the collective . . . the thought of our joint achievements.<sup>204</sup>

This simple anecdote related above exemplifies Makarenko's belief that individuals benefit from considering the interest of others ahead of their own. He was critical of what he called the "old logic," a term he used to characterize the attitudes and practices of bourgeois societies, which he considered to be primarily self-serving.

On the merit of punishment:

(a) After I had pronounced in no uncertain terms the right to punish as a right that I would not forego, the students understood very well that I would keep to this. The clearer and more definitive the right to making demands is articulated, the less needs to be demanded, and the more naturally derives the overall style.<sup>205</sup>

(b) In our colony, the right to punish was given to one person only [Makarenko].<sup>206</sup>

(c) The basic principle, which was decisive for the whole system of punishment, was "The utmost possible demands on a person, but at the same time the utmost possible respect for him."<sup>207</sup>

(d) A reasonable system of punishment is . . . imperative.

<sup>203</sup>Ibid., 450.

<sup>204</sup>Ibid.

<sup>205</sup>Ibid., 327.

<sup>206</sup>"Schlussfolgerungen," in PSOW, XXXI, 4 (1983): 91.

<sup>207</sup>Werke, vol. V, 404.

It helps in forming strong character, educates toward a sense of responsibility, trains the will and strengthens self-confidence and the ability to withstand and overcome temptations.<sup>208</sup>

(e) In my system of punishment I advocated the following principle: The best [students] are to be punished first, the bad ones last or not at all. This is our, the Soviet principle.<sup>209</sup>

(f) Yes, comrades, actually one should not punish the bad [students] but the better ones. The poor ones should be forgiven, but everyone must know: This one is the best, he did not get away with the smallest trifle. Try this out once, not to punish for the most serious transgressions but for the most insignificant ones. In the Dzerzhinsky Commune, for example, in the end we did not punish theft any more. What can one do, anyhow--he is so much used to it! We even told him: "You will steal again." Hence punishment must be for minor offenses.<sup>210</sup>

(g) For the communards there was one form of punishment only: arrest. . . . Arrest meant that the person concerned had to come to my workroom at the appointed time to serve his time.<sup>211</sup> Wasja Kljuschnik, a splendid person, was sitting under arrest more often than anyone else. Why? He would announce: "Anton Semjonowisch, I take my leave until seven o'clock." He returned ten minutes after seven. He had made a promise; he had set the appointed time; and now he had come too late. Go into arrest! No one forced you to announce that you would be back by seven. . . . You have given a promise, you have set the time, now stick to it. You have been late; you go into arrest.<sup>212</sup>

(h) [Makarenko, in a lecture to educators on March 9, 1939, shortly before his death.] I departed from the [Dzerzhinsky] Commune . . . You will understand that this was one of the most tragic moments in my life. I had great difficulty in speaking. Suddenly I notice: on top of the piano, in the big assembly room, lies dust. I continued my speech, asking; "Who was cleaning up today?" One gives me the name. "This

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<sup>208</sup>Ibid., 398.

<sup>209</sup>Ibid., 305.

<sup>210</sup>Schlussfolgerungen, 98.

<sup>211</sup>Ibid., 90.

<sup>212</sup>Werke, vol. V, 305-306.

communard goes five hours into arrest!" He [the culprit] said: "Anton Semjonowitsch, you are taking your farewell!" I, however, punished him even at that moment and was not lenient.

If a collective knows that its best are punished first, then punishment acquires a true Soviet character.<sup>213</sup>

During his many years of experience, Makarenko developed a punishment system. This system was based largely on his respect for the dignity and innate goodness of each child. It did not have the objective of chastising pupils or of inflicting pain. Rather, the intentions were to stimulate students to correct their behavior out of their own volition.

On discipline:<sup>214</sup>

(a) What is discipline? In our practice, some of the teachers and pedagogical thinkers are apt to regard discipline as a means of education. I hold that discipline is not a means of education but a result of education, and [if used] as a means of education it must differ from regimen. . . . In making this assertion I suggest that discipline should be given a broader meaning than the conventionally accepted one in days before the revolution--in prerevolutionary schools and in prerevolutionary society. Then it was a form of domination, a form of suppression of personality, individual will, and individual aspirations. . . . In our society, discipline is both a moral and a political requirement. . . . In our society defiance of discipline means that the person is acting against society, and we must judge his behavior from the political and moral points of view. (pp. 55-56)

(b) First of all, as we already know, our discipline must always be a conscious discipline. . . . I emphatically

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<sup>213</sup>Ibid., 306.

<sup>214</sup>The following five theorems on discipline were given by Makarenko in his lecture "Discipline, Regimen, Punishment and Reward." (Jan. 1938) Quotations in this section all come from this lecture, and the page numbers are given in parentheses at the end of the quoted material. In Problems, 27-87.



insist on that, as differing from prerevolutionary discipline, ours-- being a moral and political requirement--should be a conscious striving, that is, it should be accompanied by a full awareness of what discipline is and what it is needed for. (pp. 56-57)

(c) Secondly, the logic of our discipline asserts that discipline places each separate individual in a more secure and free position. This paradoxical assertion that discipline is freedom is very easily accepted by youngsters. The truth of it is confirmed for them at every step, and in their active campaigning for discipline they themselves say that it is freedom.

Discipline in a collective means perfect security for every individual, complete confidence in his right, his abilities and his future. . . . It is not only I but the whole collective who accuses the offender of going against the interests of the other members. . . . This cooperation on the part of the pupils can perhaps be put down to the fact that a good half of the waifs and juvenile delinquents I had then . . . had suffered all the terrible hardships of an undisciplined life. . . . These once victimized children looked upon discipline as a real godsend, recognizing it to be an essential condition for the full development of their personality. (pp. 59-60)

(d) The third point of my moral theory, which should be set before the collective . . . and should always guide it in its fight for discipline, is this: the interests of the collective are superior to the interests of the individual. (p. 62)

(e) And last but not least, here is the fourth theorem which should be taught to the children as pure theory: discipline is an adornment for the collective. This aspect of discipline--its beauty and dignity--is most important. . . . The question of making discipline pleasant, exciting and evocative is simply a question of pedagogical technique. . .

This sensitivity to beauty will be the last finishing touch to discipline, making it a thing of really fine workmanship. . . . If a collective does attain it and follows the logic that the higher you stand the more is demanded of you, if it adopts this logic as genuine, living logic, it will mean that in discipline and education the collective has reached a certain satisfactory level. (pp. 67;70)

(f) And now for the last theoretical general premise. . . : if a person has to do something he finds pleasure in doing, he will always do it, discipline or no discipline; discipline comes in when he does something he finds

unpleasant to do with equal pleasure. This is a very important disciplinary thesis. (p. 70)

(g) What then is the basis of discipline? To put it into plain words . . . the basis of discipline is exactingness [demanding] without theory. If anyone were to ask me to define the essence of my pedagogical experience in the briefest of formulas, I would say: place the utmost demands on a person and treat him with the utmost respect. I am convinced that this is the formula of Soviet discipline. (p.71)

Makarenko considered discipline an important component of education, and he developed his own theories regarding discipline. He saw discipline in his students to be a successful outcome of education, rather than an instrument of control over students, achieved through regimen and drill. He found that many of his pupils welcomed discipline, as through discipline they experienced feelings of security. Makarenko believed the most important benefit of a disciplined approach to life to be the ability of humans to perform pleasant and unpleasant tasks with equal pleasure. To Makarenko, discipline had beauty and dignity. He considered it possible that teachers could render discipline pleasant and exciting.

The above presentation would be one-sided without some indication of still other educational values that Makarenko also esteemed highly, even though they could be found in bourgeois societies and in prerevolutionary Russia. For one thing, Makarenko believed strongly in the value of play for children. He stated his reasons in the lecture "Some Pedagogical Conclusions from My Experience." (1938):

Any children's organization must be thoroughly imbued by play. Consider that we are talking here of children, there is a yearning for play that we must meet, not because one says: Work and fun--each in its own time, but because, one day, the child will work [in the same way] as it once played. I was in favor that . . . the pedagogues should participate in this play.<sup>215</sup>

Makarenko wanted to build and promote traditions in his colonies, to provide, as Hans H. Groothoff elucidates, inner and outer stability to the collective, not only through its organizational structure, but also through social forms. In the early days of the Gorky Colony, while defending before authorities his use of compulsion, Makarenko explained, "as long as the collective, and the organs of the collective, had not been created, as long as no traditions existed . . . the teacher was entitled--nay, was bound!--to use compulsion."<sup>216</sup> Groothoff explains that Makarenko aspired to develop something he called "style and tone," meaning that institutions, just as society, should cultivate their own style of life and a comparable tone in social discourse. Groothoff emphasizes that the "style and tone" of a community express the essentially human and social spirit of togetherness. In his words, "style and tone are of eminent educational value."<sup>217</sup> Makarenko was keenly aware of the worth of style and tone in human

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<sup>215</sup>"Schlussfolgerungen," in PSOW XXXI,4 (1983): 88.

<sup>216</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 218; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 132.

<sup>217</sup>Groothoff, "Makarenko und das Problem der Selbstentfremdung," in Wege der Forschung, 363.

society. In his "Poem" (The Road to Life) he observed:

Style and tone have always been ignored in pedagogical theory, but in reality these qualities come under one of the most important headings in collective education. Style is a delicate and perishable substance. It needs constant care, daily attention, and requires as much tending as a bed of flowers. It cannot be rapidly built up, since it is unthinkable without the accumulation of tradition, that is to say, of conceptions and habits accepted not by the consciousness alone, but by conscious respect for the experience of older [former] generations [of the colony], for the vast authority of a given collective.<sup>218</sup>

Makarenko observed that the failure of many children's institutions could be attributed to the fact that they had created neither style, nor habits and traditions.

On November 7, 1938, the newspaper Moscow News published Makarenko's article "Fullness of Soviet Life Brings Colorful Novels into Being," translated into in English. Here, Makarenko described his life, the forging of his educational principles in the Gorky Colony, and Gorky's suggestion that he write a book about the colony and about "the new people that were emerging from it." A brief passage from this article is cited here as it rounds off the theme presently under review. One is prompted to ask, could Makarenko's ideas, as expressed in the following passage, be not equally esteemed by educators hostile to Soviet beliefs?

I worked in the Gorky Colony for eight years, during which I succeeded in creating an interesting and highly beneficial institution. In 1928 my colony had 400 inmates and an extensive organization, including

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<sup>218</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 263; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 156.

workshops, a dairy and hog farm. Our colony constituted a free association of people, for no one was compelled to live there. Moreover, one of my guiding pedagogical principles was the destruction of all walls and fences. Our grounds were open on all sides and to leave the colony presented no difficulty whatever.

Ours was a well-disciplined, inspired collective bound by strong ties of friendship. The pupils performed their duties willingly, for they were convinced that this was necessary not only for their own good but for the good of the whole country. They studied in the school until the age of 19 or 20, when they left either to work in some plant or to continue their education. At the same time we made their lives in the colony as full and as beautiful as we could. They had their own theatre, their orchestra, there was always an abundance of flowers and the young people were nicely dressed. . . [They] had a most beneficial influence on the surrounding population, who esteemed them for their sociability, their ingenuity, their cheerful spirits and irreproachable manners.

My basic rule in this work was: "Respect the individual as much as possible and require from him as much as possible." I demanded from my pupils energy, purposefulness, social activity, respect for the community and its interests.<sup>219</sup>

### Conclusion

Makarenko developed his educational ideas based on his observations and experience. His vision of a moral and just society provided a decisive foundation for his thinking. He was also guided by an unshakable belief that human beings are inherently good and have the potential for moral growth. Because of the nature of his students and

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<sup>219</sup>G. Hillig and S. Weitz, eds., Makarenko Materialien I. Quellen, Studien, Bibliographische Beiträge [Makarenko Materials I. Sources, studies, bibliographical contributions]. (Marburg: VVG Verlags-und Vertriebsgemeinschaft, 1969), 31-32.

circumstances, Makarenko came to view education as encompassing upbringing as well as traditional schooling. He focussed primarily on the character development of his students. He believed that children and youth should be educated to become socially responsible and community minded individuals with habits of discipline and cooperation. The elements of Makarenko's educational ideas were not new. His interpretations and applications of traditional concepts make Makarenko noteworthy and significant as an educator. The following chapter examines the question whether or not any of Makarenko's educational ideas and methods can be considered to be of general value to educators.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE GENERAL CONTRIBUTION OF MAKARENKO'S EDUCATIONAL IDEAS

Chapter VII addresses an assessment of Makarenko's general contribution to education and its applicability to educational systems outside the Soviet context. This appraisal examines elements of Makarenko's educational principles that are relevant outside the totalitarian state and beneficial to pedagogical thought and practice worldwide.

#### Social and Political Context

The chapter first assesses Makarenko's educational principles in their social and political context. How did Makarenko regard the general applicability of his educational ideas? How did educators in East and West assess the general contribution of his ideas to education? What was Makarenko's link to Marxism and Soviet ideology? The chapter then identifies Makarenko's foremost educational principles which were of value to pedagogy in general and applicable outside the Soviet Union. Rather than using a "commonly binding criterion" of what is "pedagogically justifiable," this analysis is guided by what Froese calls

"the question of the pedagogical sense of responsibility." This concept, according to Froese, relies on whether the pedagogue regards himself as the advocate of the child "against the demands of 'objective forces.'"<sup>1</sup>

### Makarenko's Own Appraisal

Makarenko was convinced of three things: one, that his pedagogy was truly Soviet, two, that it was not designed specifically for homeless and difficult children but for normal pupils and thus applicable to "anyone working in the field of education," and three that collective education was only possible within a socialist society.

By 1928, Makarenko had concluded that his "pedagogical scheme [was] the true Bolshevik scheme" and that he had achieved a genuine "Soviet social education." He further believed that his general educational system and not just certain conclusions could be applied to normal children in "any [Soviet] children's collective" because, as he explained, "from the very outset, I made it my working hypothesis that no special methods were to be applied in their [homeless waifs] case."<sup>2</sup> He attributed this belief to his deep conviction that boys and girls become delinquents only because they are treated as delinquents and that

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<sup>1</sup>Froese, "Die Sowjetsozialistische Pädagogik A. S. Makarenkos," in Wege der Forschung, 341.

<sup>2</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 386; GW Marburg edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 234; Problems, 28.



"normal education, active and purposeful, very quickly shapes them into a perfectly normal collective."<sup>3</sup> As pointed out in the previous chapter, the concept of the collective is basic to Makarenko's educational ideas, it is, to use Bruce Baker's expression, "the hub around which [his] thinking on education and society revolves."<sup>4</sup> In one of his writings Makarenko makes clear that the collective as a social entity is only conceivable in a socialist society, "at least this is clearly and distinctly accentuated by the Russian language."<sup>5</sup> He illustrated this pronouncement by saying that in the Soviet Union one would commonly speak of "the collective of the Kharkov tractor plants," but that no one would ever use the expression "the collective of the Ford works."<sup>6</sup> Makarenko obviously wanted to show that the concept of the collective was deeply embedded in the Soviet socialist context and could not be transferred to nonsocialist societies. Thus it appears that Makarenko understood his theories and practices to be relevant and applicable to normal children who lived in a socialist system.

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<sup>3</sup>Problems, 54, 28; Werke, vol. V, 134, 110.

<sup>4</sup>Bruce Baker, "Review Article: Anton Makarenko and the Idea of the Collective." Educational Theory 18 (Summer 1968): 286.

<sup>5</sup>Werke, vol. V, 473.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 473.

## Appraisals by Educators in East and West

The views of Western educators differ from those of Eastern educators regarding the applicability of Makarenko's educational ideas outside the Soviet context. Some Western scholars believe that we can learn from the educational lessons of Makarenko; other Western scholars see in Makarenko nothing but a devoted Marxist and an orthodox communist, a view that has, in Robert Ulich's words, "prevented an unprejudiced evaluation" of his education; others in the Soviet Union hold that Makarenko's achievements cannot be separated from the Soviet context and thus are not transferable to Western societies.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Robert Ulich, History of Educational Thought. Revised Edition. (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1968), 349; Wolf Rainer Wendth, "Möglichst hohe Forderungen an den Menschen und möglichst hohe Achtung vor ihm." [The utmost possible demands on a person, and the utmost possible respect for him] in Wege der Forschung, 510-11. Among the more prominent educators who thought that the West could learn from Makarenko are John Dewey, Bruce Baker, Bob Caskey, and Victor Zilberman.

Dewey, in 1933, introduced the film Road to Life, (see chapter three) with the words: "You will . . . see an educational lesson of the power of freedom, sympathy, work and play to redeem the juvenile delinquent; a lesson from which we too may learn." See Bowen, Soviet Education, 5.

Bruce Baker stated, "it is clear that Makarenko has raised issues that continue to stimulate discussion and controversy to this day." See Bruce Baker, "Anton Makarenko and the Idea of the Collective," 285.

Bob Caskey recommended "to explore the possible applications of the Makarenko methods to the upbringing of problem youngsters in the United States." See Bob Caskey, "The Pedagogical Theories of A. S. Makarenko: A Comparative Analysis." Comparative Education 15 (October 1979): 283.

Victor Zilberman believed that "knowledge of Makarenko's work can stimulate and raise the professional level of people working in different areas of education." See Zilberman, 45.

Beatrice Beach Szekely, former editor of Soviet Education, has characterized the opposing positions as follows.

Research on Makarenko's teaching that is highly regarded in the West, if not in the USSR, is that conducted in West Germany at the Center for Comparative Pedagogy in Marburg [Germany], under the direction of Professor Leonhard Froese. The Marburg scholars view Makarenko outside the context of Soviet national development, as an exponent of humanistic social upbringing, the value of whose work extends far beyond a narrowly national experience. To the Soviets, as the late Professor E. I. Monoszon makes clear . . . such a cosmopolitan viewpoint is anathema. Makarenko remains a national hero to Soviet educationists, and his accomplishments cannot be divorced from those of the Soviet state he served."

#### Makarenko and Marxism

Makarenko's educational and literary work cannot be fully understood in isolation from the Soviet context in which he lived, thought, and acted. He developed his educational tenets during the formative years of the Russian Revolution, within a society that oriented itself toward Soviet ideology, and he expressed his ideas in the language of this ideology, namely, communist terminology. He was devoted to the development of Soviet communism, to the "aims and tasks of our revolution," to the "social needs" and "aspirations of the Soviet people." He believed that educational aims should arise out of these needs and

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"Beatrice Beach Szekely. ed. "Editor's Introduction." Soviet Education, XX, (October 1978):4.

aspirations.<sup>9</sup>

Makarenko's thinking was imbued with Marxist-Leninist concepts. Although there are no exact data with which to measure Makarenko's familiarity with Marx's writings, he no doubt accepted certain of Marx's theories, e.g., that social reform could be achieved through education, that education had to serve the interests of the working class, that communal life would educate the socialist man, and that the interests of the individual should be in harmony with the interests of society.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, some of Makarenko's fundamental educational beliefs parallel those of Marx's scattered remarks on pedagogy. Groothoff named the following: Youths should concurrently receive a polytechnical and moral education; their moral consciousness should develop alongside social and political awareness; their forces and energy should not be groomed as "forces per se," but channeled toward versatile application in an industrially productive society.<sup>11</sup> Makarenko was certainly in agreement with Marx, and Rousseau for that matter, that bad environmental

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<sup>9</sup>Problems, 32; Werke, vol. V, 113-14.

<sup>10</sup>Robert Cohen, On the Marxist Philosophy of Education, 208, see also 207; Rüttenauer, Anton Makarenko, 74.

<sup>11</sup>Groothoff, "Makarenko und das Problem der Selbstentfremdung," in Wege der Forschung, 347. Groothoff remarked that Marxism had shown a certain affinity to pedagogy in both East and West and that Marxism had fundamentally influenced educational matters.

conditions corrupt human beings.

As previously stated, many standard interpretations categorize Makarenko as a Soviet Marxist. Nicholas Hans describes Makarenko as an "orthodox communist, a follower of Lenin and Stalin," whose educational ideas and practices could be understood "only in this connection."<sup>12</sup> Gerhard Möbus holds that Makarenko's entire subject matter was chosen according to the standards of historical and dialectical materialism.<sup>13</sup>

In my research I could find no evidence that Makarenko overtly identified with Marxism, nor that he had made a careful study of Marxist philosophy. Götz Hillig, in his recent investigations, found in Makarenko's "Application to the Central Institute of Organizers of People's Education" [The E. A. Litkens Institute] the statement: "In the field of political economy and history of socialism I studied Tugan-Baranovskij and Zeleznov. I have read some works by Marx, but not Das Kapital."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Nicholas Hans, The Russian Tradition in Education. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 166.

<sup>13</sup>Gerh. Möbus, "Der Pädagoge als Diktator [The pedagogue as dictator], in Hillig, ed., Makarenko in Deutschland 1927-1967, 234.

<sup>14</sup>Hillig, "Der schwierige Weg zum Kommunismus," in Hundert Jahre, 213, 214. In his research, Hillig found additional facts relevant to the assertions that Makarenko was an orthodox communist and a follower of Stalin. He points out that in his writings of the early 1930s Makarenko was critical of the negative aspects of Soviet life and that these passages were deleted in the posthumous edition published by the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences in Moscow. Hillig found that

In concluding these remarks on the applicability of Makarenko's educational ideas outside the context of Soviet socialism, I shall take a cautious approach in assessing the magnitude to which Makarenko's tenets have derived from Marxism and Soviet ideology. I agree with Groothoff who put the matter like this: "One can perhaps risk the following thesis, that Makarenko certainly affirmed Marx [and] . . . the Russian Revolution, but that, within this context, he relied on himself, on his experience and on his reflections."<sup>15</sup> For the pedagogue, so Rüttenauer believes,

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Makarenko twice included homages to Stalin--primarily in his journalistic and belletristic writings--once after the Moscow show trials of August 1936 and the ensuing wholesale arrests that included numerous pedagogues and writers, and once after the election campaigns of the Supreme Soviets (October 1937). Hillig sees Makarenko's praises to Stalin as self protective measures, taken partly as a result of Gorky's death, under whose patronage Makarenko had stood, and partly out of fear of denunciation and arrest. Ibid., 224.

In November 1988, during a conversation between Hillig and Valentin Kumarin, (the well-known Soviet Makarenko scholar and author of books and articles on Makarenko), Kumarin made a statement that gives an indication of Makarenko's true feelings toward Stalin: "If Galina Stachievna [Makarenko's wife and Party member] has told me the truth, then it was like this: Makarenko's antipathy against Stalin was so immense, that he once compared the Party to a kolkhoz [collective farm] that submitted itself without a murmur to the greatest of all terrorists, 'unanimously condoning' his actions. Makarenko expressed it like this: 'My sunshine, if you return to this kolkhoz then I will kill myself'. . . . Makarenko himself had not been admitted to the Party, and presumably wanted his wife to remain Party-less as well." This conversation is documented in G. Hillig, ed., Opuscula Makarenkiana, Nr. 10, Marburg: Makarenko Referat, 1989, 47-48.

<sup>15</sup>Groothoff, "Makarenko und das Problem der Selbstentfremdung," in Wege der Forschung, 353.

the following rule, formulated by W. Klafki, applies:

The fact that a certain world view has opened somebody's eyes to a pedagogical problem and its interpretation, and that this [interpretation] is continuing to ensue in the language of this world view, does not mean that the [pedagogical] problem should not possess its own dignity, that it could only exist within the framework of this world view.<sup>16</sup>

I join B. Baker who suggested that we consider Makarenko on his own terms rather than try to determine the extent to which his writings reflect the views of Marx, Lenin, or those in political control.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>W. Klafki, cited in Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 2-3.

<sup>17</sup>Bruce Baker, "Anton Makarenko and the Idea of the Collective," 287.

## Ideas and Practices of General Educational Value

### Educational Methods

Makarenko's concept of educational methods was so unorthodox and surprisingly flexible that it has fascinated even pedagogues holding very different world views. Essentially, Makarenko made four distinct points of general interest regarding the origin and application of educational methods. One was that a clear distinction must be drawn between methods of classroom instruction and, in Makarenko's terminology, "methods of upbringing," because of their fundamentally different aims. Further, methods of upbringing should derive from two sources: clearly established goals and the experiences of the practitioner, and not from adjacent sciences such as biology and psychology. A third point he stressed was that methods of upbringing should never be considered in isolation from the whole system of methods used for reaching pre-determined goals. And finally, he reminds us that pedagogy is a complex, diversified, and ever changing science. In the process of bringing up a child it is impossible to apply ready-made formulas, fixed procedures, or routine patterns.

As mentioned in chapter six, Makarenko's concept of education went far beyond schooling narrowly conceived as



book learning and classroom instruction; it involved developing the whole person, a process Makarenko termed "upbringing." In his lecture "Methods of Upbringing" he explained: "In my experience I was obliged to make upbringing my main goal. Since I was entrusted with the reformation of the so-called juvenile delinquents, my primary task was to give them a moral education. . . . [What] I was expected to do above all else was to remold that [their] character."<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Makarenko focused his attention on upbringing and made this his main educational concern. When speaking of methods, he used the term "upbringing" much more fluidly than is common. Never did he call for planning and presenting instruction in a formal, systematic way; this was the province of the teacher, who was concerned with text books and classroom instruction.

To Makarenko "educational methods" signified a wide range of learning processes, experiences, and influences that applied to the student's personal growth and moral development. Consequently, he frequently replaced the term "educational methods" with broader expressions such as "educational means," "plans," "operations," "procedures," and "ways" to imply that no fixed prescriptions were used. Even in his lecture "Methods of Upbringing," (1938) he offered no recipes or formulas. Instead he gave an overview

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<sup>18</sup>Problems, 30; Werke, vol. V, 112.

of how he was building traditions that enabled his colonists to develop social awareness, proper conduct, and moral character.<sup>19</sup>

To Makarenko, the methods of upbringing were to derive from clearly established social goals. In the above-mentioned lecture he asked: "Wherefrom can the aims of education [upbringing] arise? From our social needs, of course, from the aspirations of the Soviet people, from the aims and tasks of our revolution."<sup>20</sup> Later in the same lecture he enlarged on this question:

I take the concept [of] "educational goal" to mean the programme of a personality, the programme of a character, and what is more I put into the concept "character" all that a personality holds, that is, the nature of his outward manifestation, his inner convictions, his political education and his knowledge--the picture of a human personality in its entirety. I maintain that we, pedagogues, should have such a programme of human personality towards which we must strive.<sup>21</sup>

Observing that pedagogical thinkers of his time (Makarenko was thinking of the pedologists) based their educational methods on the theories of psychology and biology, he voiced his disapproval:

I am first of all convinced that the methodology of childrearing [sic methods of upbringing] cannot be derived from the propositions of related sciences regardless of how well such sciences as psychology and biology have been developed, especially the latter after Pavlov's work. I am convinced that we have no

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<sup>19</sup>Problems, 27-53; Werke, vol. V, 109-133.

<sup>20</sup>Problems, 32; Werke, vol. V, 113-14.

<sup>21</sup>Problems, 37; Werke, vol. V, 117-18.

right to make a direct deduction from the data of these sciences to educational methods.

Moreover, I believe that child-rearing [upbringing] methods can be derived only from experience.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, Makarenko added that these sciences were of value and importance to education because they could confirm practical achievements. They should not serve as the premise for any educational conclusions. He concluded that "a formula of aims" could not be obtained from either biology or psychology, but "only from our social history, from our social environment."<sup>23</sup> Makarenko pointed out that once educational goals were explored, the pedagogue had to deal with the "difficult question" of the methods necessary to reach that goal.<sup>24</sup> Feifel observed that the two domains of education discussed by Makarenko, that of classroom instruction and upbringing, were distinguished by separate considerations: classroom instruction being primarily a concern of the individual learner, and upbringing a social concern. He believes that upbringing, in Makarenko's sense, is mainly a process of guiding and molding, shaping, and habit-forming. Upbringing in this sense makes an appeal not to the child's intellect, but, above all, to the child's

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<sup>22</sup>Problems, 31-32; Werke, vol. V, 113. I used Lehrman's translation, in Lehrman, "The Pedagogical Ideas," 130.

<sup>23</sup>Problems, 32-33; Werke, vol. V, 114.

<sup>24</sup>Werke, vol. V, 343.

will to build character.<sup>25</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Makarenko insisted that methods of upbringing be considered within the whole system of educational methods. In "Methods of Upbringing" Makarenko affirmed: "No means whatever can be pronounced good or bad if it is considered apart from other means, from a whole complex of other influences."<sup>26</sup> Makarenko gave as an example the question of whether or not one should punish a child by pointing to the [then] prevailing axiom--which had never been subjected to doubt--that punishment educates a slave. Makarenko argued:

Punishment may educate a slave, but sometimes it may also educate a very good person, a very free and proud person. In my own experience, you will be surprised to hear, punishment was also among the means I resorted to when I was confronted with the task of inculcating dignity and self-respect in my charges.

I will tell you afterwards in what cases punishment results in the cultivation of human dignity. Obviously, this effect can be achieved only in a definite environment of other means and at a definite stage of development.<sup>27</sup>

Makarenko resolved that no method of upbringing, not even one that is universally accepted, could be invariably considered ideal and effective. He found that "the best of means is sure to be the worst of means sometimes" and, finally, that no system of means could be endorsed as an

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<sup>25</sup>Feifel, Personale und Kollektive Erziehung, 91.

<sup>26</sup>Werke, vol. V, 116; Problems, 35-36.

<sup>27</sup>Problems, 35-36; Werke, vol. V, 116.

irrevocable system.<sup>28</sup> From this experience Makarenko arrived at a concept of upbringing that he characterized thus: "By and large, pedagogy [upbringing] is the most dialectical, mobile, complex and diversified of sciences. This assertion makes the credo of my pedagogical faith."<sup>29</sup>

In 1932, after having been immersed in the philosophy of upbringing for twelve years, Makarenko ventured to formulate his understanding in a treatise titled, "Attempt Toward a Method for Working in a Children's Labor Colony," a text not previously translated into English. A paragraph pertinent to the present discussion reads:

Above all else, the pedagogical process must be useful and practical to the utmost possible degree. Therefore it is unthinkable to stand for the use of ready-made models of any kind. There are neither infallible means, nor means that should be unconditionally rejected. According to the circumstances, the time, the characteristics of a person or the collective, the talent and qualifications of the teachers, or the most imminent goal, and to the present moment, the scope of application of one method or another can be enlarged to a universal scale, or reduce to zero. No known science is more dialectical than pedagogy and, therefore, there is no other domain wherein experience has such vast importance.

This diversity of educational means, this richness of color and this changeability of the educational picture puts the pedagogical theorists into a position of exceptional responsibility.<sup>30</sup>

Clearly, Makarenko wanted to emphasize that in

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Problems, 36; Werke, vol. V, 117.

<sup>30</sup>Werke, vol. V, 479.

upbringing it is unthinkable to operate according to ready-made models. Instead, educators should keep their methods lively and flexible, adapting them to the situation and pupils' needs. Rüttenauer reflects that Makarenko's view of pedagogy as a "dialectic, mobile, complex and diversified science" in no way meant that every pedagogical statement was relative or ambivalent. She makes clear that Makarenko emphasized the importance of considering upbringing in the living reality of a given moment. Rüttenauer believes that Makarenko's educational success, as well as the recognition and admiration he drew from educators worldwide, were due to this insight.<sup>31</sup>

It may be fitting to give an example of Makarenko's skill in responding imaginatively to a particular situation. The following story was told by Semyon Kalabalin (1903-1972), a former colonist at the Gorky Colony.

Makarenko's educative methods were extremely varied.

One morning a group of girls burst into his . . . office volubly protesting that they would not go outside any more, not for anything in the world.

"Why not?" Makarenko asked.

"Because Vasya Gud swears like a [trooper] cobbler.

"You don't mean to say he is still swearing, girls?"

"Why should we tell lies?"

I was present during this scene and felt uncomfortable. I had heard Gud swearing so many times and had never done anything to stop it.

"Very well girls, go along," Makarenko said, then turned to me, "Vasily should simply be given a fright, that will stop him swearing. Call him in." . . .

It was a flustered Vasya whom Makarenko greeted in an ominous hissing voice:

"So you haven't stopped maltreating our splendid

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<sup>31</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 176-77.

Russian language? You've become so shameless that you even swear in the presence of girls! The next thing you'll be barking at me! I'm not going to have it! No, sir! How are you standing! Come along! Come into the woods with me, I'll show you how to swear! You'll remember this for a long time, young fellow-me-lad! Come along!"

"Where to, Anton Semyonovich?" Vasya Gud bleated.

"To the woods! The woods!"

And off they went to the forest, Makarenko leading the way. When they were out of earshot . . . Makarenko stopped in a small clearing.

"Now swear here. Swear for all you are worth!"

"Anton Semyonovich, I won't do it any more. Punish me any other way you like."

"I'm not punishing you, I'm offering you the facilities [setting]. Fire away! Here's my watch. It's twelve now. You can work till six o'clock. That will give you plenty of time to swear to your heart's content. Fire away!"

Makarenko went away.

Whether Vasya swore or not no one knows. Maybe he would have gone away altogether but for the watch. It held him like a leash.

At six o'clock sharp, Vasya came to [Makarenko's] office.

"I've finished. Here's your watch."

"For how many years have you sworn yourself dry?" asked Makarenko.

"For fifty years!" Vasya burst out.

And wonder of wonders--Vasya Gud stopped using bad language. Nor was he the only one."

### Pedagogical Mastery

If Makarenko did not believe in fixed, ready-made educational methods, he nonetheless believed very strongly in what he termed "pedagogical mastery." Semyon Kalabalin, a well-known figure in Soviet education, who had once been a waif in the Gorky Colony and later a member of Makarenko's

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<sup>32</sup>"Reminiscences by Semyon Kalabalin," in Makarenko, His Life and Work, no editor, trans. Bernard Isaacs (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.), 74-75; see also Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 169-171.

teaching staff, where he received his "pedagogical apprenticeship," was well qualified to report of Makarenko's "pedagogical mastery." In his reminiscences Kalabalin described Makarenko as never needing any "special" measures; instead, he "worked" on his teachers through his human dignity, his love for the children, and above all through his unconditional demands.<sup>33</sup>

Makarenko repeatedly stated that pedagogical mastery was essential to good and effective teaching. Knowledge of educational theories and methods alone would not fully qualify a teacher; teachers had also to acquire specific personal facilities and skills. Teacher training, he maintained, had to be further developed and augmented by specific exercises, for example voice training, to gain "pedagogical mastery." Though Lehrman thinks that Makarenko's recommended teacher training program was vague and "probably incomprehensible in an American university education department," I believe that his ideas and suggestions on teacher training will be engaging, stimulating, if not positively helpful to teachers in general. As Zilberman states, (though he may have been thinking of Makarenko's work in general), "Knowledge of Makarenko's work can stimulate and raise the professional

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<sup>33</sup>Semyon Kalabalin, cited in Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 77.



level of people working in different areas of education."<sup>34</sup>

Makarenko frequently lectured and wrote on the theme of pedagogical mastery. In October 1938, in a presentation to educators titled "Some Pedagogical Conclusions Based on My Experience," he stressed the need for teachers to acquire pedagogical mastery during their training so they would be in command of their students. He said:

As you know yourself, in our schools the children sit quietly in their lesson with one teacher, but not with another teacher. The reason for this is by no means that one teacher has talent and the other has none, but simply that one of them is a master and the other is not. Consequently, teachers, in addition to their regular training courses, need to receive training in pedagogical mastery.<sup>35</sup>

To acquire pedagogical mastery, Makarenko emphasized teacher training and professional preparation, particularly because he felt the pedagogical institutes' teacher training programs were deficient. From his own experience he knew that educators could not rely on their talents alone and that their training, to be competent, had to embrace many other capacities and habits besides academic and professional knowledge.

In describing specifically what he meant by pedagogical mastery, Makarenko explained that in daily practice he and other experienced pedagogues had found that

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<sup>34</sup>Lehrman, "The Pedagogical Ideas," 135; Zilberman, "Anton Makarenko: Contribution to Soviet Educational Theory," 45.

<sup>35</sup>"Schlussfolgerungen," in PSOW, XXXI,4 (1983): 87; Werke, vol. V, 242.

many little things were decisive in their work: "How should one stand? How should one sit? How should one, sitting at a table, get up from one's chair. How should one lift one's voice, smile, look."<sup>36</sup> Makarenko stated that it was skills of just such a nature that constituted "pedagogical mastery." He underscored that pedagogical mastery was an art that did not require any special talent, rather it resulted from specialized training, like that of a doctor or a musician. "One [person] may be better, another worse, depending on the quality of the instrument, the training, etc."<sup>37</sup> The trouble was that teachers did not get this kind of training in pedagogical institutions.

Makarenko characterized pedagogical mastery by specific competencies and skills, including voice training, the art of movement, even the art of giving someone an appropriate gaze. All of these capacities, Makarenko believed, were the hallmark of a good educator. Makarenko persistently stressed two skills: voice training and mimicry (command over one's features). To illustrate his point, he told how he had acquired real pedagogical mastership only after having learned to say "come here" in fifteen or twenty different tones of voice, and after he had learned to give his face and his posture twenty different

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<sup>36</sup>Werke, vol. V, 242. Makarenko stressed again and again that in upbringing, the "little things" were of greatest significance, see Werke, vol. IV, 527; vol. V, 241 and 279.

<sup>37</sup>Makarenko, His Life and Work, 258; Werke, vol. V, 277.

nuances of expression."<sup>38</sup> Such mastery was absolutely necessary when guiding young people's upbringing and teachers had to be trained to acquire such skills, for, as he explained, many parents and teachers did not know how to speak to a child. In the lecture "Education in the Family and at School" Makarenko gave this example:

The other day a father came to me and said:  
 "I am communist, a worker. I have a good son. He does not obey me. I tell him something but he does not obey me. I say it for the second time--he does not obey. I say it for the third time--he does not obey. What shall I do with him?"

I asked the father . . . to sit down and began a conversation with him.

"Now show me how you talk to your son."

"Well, like this."

"Try it once this way."

"It does not work."

"Try again."

I spent half an hour with him, and then he had learned how to give an order. It was merely a matter of voice.<sup>39</sup>

Training the voice was important for yet another reason: educators needed that training to express their thoughts and feelings with the utmost precision, control, and determination. For example, they had to know in what tone of voice to give a command, how far to show anger or feelings of indignation. Makarenko believed that "all this is, in fact, education."<sup>40</sup> When in 1939, during a talk to educators, Makarenko expressed his regret that the voice is

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<sup>38</sup>Makarenko, His Life and Work, 259; Werke, vol. V, 278.

<sup>39</sup>Werke, vol. IV, 527.

<sup>40</sup>Problems, 104; Werke, vol. V, 183.

not trained in teacher training institutions he did not know that in another part of the world, twenty years earlier, the Austrian philosopher and educator Rudolf Steiner gave speech exercises to teachers at the Waldorf School that he had founded in 1919. Steiner made the point that a common speech weakness is that people just skip over sounds, whereas speech is there to be understood. In his discussions with teachers, he stated:

It is important that side by side with all other outer work we should cultivate our speech articulation. This has a certain influence, a certain effect. . . . You must pronounce each letter consciously. It would even be good for you to do something of the same kind as Demosthenes did, though perhaps not regularly. You know that, when he could not make any headway with his speaking, he put little stones on his tongue and through practice strengthened his voice so much that it sounded above the rushing of the river; this he did in order to acquire a delivery which would enable him to be heard by the Athenians.<sup>41</sup>

Rudolf Steiner also gave lessons in eurythmy, a form of movement and gesture, intended to develop the child's orientation of space, awaken a social sense through movement and develop greater body control. Thus, Makarenko's confidence that in the future teachers' colleges would require students to take lessons in voice training, posture, and control over their movements had, unknown to him, already become reality and continued to be practiced in

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<sup>41</sup>Rudolf Steiner, Discussions With Teachers (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1967), 53, 54.

Waldorf teacher training programs worldwide.<sup>42</sup>

Makarenko made some suggestions as to how voice training could be incorporated in teacher training colleges. He proposed employing at every teachers' college a competent, qualified specialist, such as an actor, who would school students' voices.<sup>43</sup> Teaching without such voice training would be difficult, for "after all, our voice is an instrument of our work that needs to be sharpened."<sup>44</sup> Makarenko suggested a number of activities to train the voice that could be conducted in teacher training institutions. In one such exercise Makarenko explained:

We are all students--you, you, and you.

You tell me, "Please, Comrade Makarenko, give us some practical lessons. A boy, say, has stolen three rubles. You are to speak to him. We shall listen to your talk and then discuss whether it was good or bad."

Such exercises are not practiced with us, yet it is a very difficult thing to talk to a boy who is suspected of having stolen something, and nobody knows whether he stole it or not.<sup>45</sup>

The following observation regarding teacher training is persuasive. Makarenko made the point that teachers are trained to know geography, history, literature, but that they did not know what a theft was that was committed by a

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<sup>42</sup>Problems, 104; Werke, vol. V, 183. Eurythmy as an art of movement was initiated by Rudolf Steiner in 1912, and incorporated in the Waldorf School curriculum as a required subject from the day of the school's founding in 1919.

<sup>43</sup>Werke, vol. IV, 526.

<sup>44</sup>Werke, vol. V, 303.

<sup>45</sup>Werke, vol. V, 279-80; Makarenko, His Life and Work, 260.

child. In his words: "Who knows what it [theft] is: coincidence, villainy, or need?"<sup>46</sup>

Another reason for the value of voice training, according to Makarenko, was that some parents and educators indulge in the "luxury" of allowing their own moods to be reflected in their voices. He thought this unacceptable; their voices, regardless of their mood, should be "normal," "good," and "firm."<sup>47</sup> He suggested that parents and educators should, before talking to a child, take themselves in hand to let their particular mood pass, for "mood and temper have nothing to do with your voice."<sup>48</sup>

Lehrman makes the point that children do not really listen to words but that they respond to the emotional effect conveyed by voice, gesture, and facial expression.<sup>49</sup> Makarenko put it like this:

A pupil apprehends your feelings and your thoughts not because he knows what is going on in your heart, but because he is watching you and listening to you. Watching a play we admire the actors on the stage, and their beautiful acting gives us aesthetic pleasure. Well, here the pupil is watching too, but the actors he is watching are educators and the impact has to be educative.<sup>50</sup>

This kind of teacher influence on the student is

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<sup>46</sup>Werke, vol. V, 280.

<sup>47</sup>Werke, vol. IV, 526.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 526.

<sup>49</sup>Lehrman, "The Pedagogical Ideas," 136.

<sup>50</sup>Problems, 104; Werke, vol. V, 183.

also highlighted by Steiner who stated in a lecture to educators: "Firstly, the teacher must see to it that he influences and works upon his pupils . . . in the details of his work, how he utters a single word, or develops each individual concept or feeling."<sup>51</sup>

In addition to training one's voice, Makarenko wanted the educator to school his facial expressions, because mien should also be independent of the educator's mood. Never did he permit himself to wear a gloomy expression, even when he was worried or not well. Makarenko was of the opinion that the educator had to be lively and wide-awake, but genuinely angry when something was wicked, so that pupils would really feel the anger and not mistake it for pedagogical moralizing. He explained that this demand was placed on all his staff and that he dismissed some educators because they grumped and pouted all the time. Grown up people working with children had to know how to control their feelings and keep their worries to themselves.<sup>52</sup> Makarenko observed that children imitate their teachers and that this behavior was most significant in upbringing. How, he argued, can a child imitate a teacher who consistently makes a sour face?<sup>53</sup>

Lastly, Makarenko drew attention to the educators'

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<sup>51</sup>Rudolf Steiner, Discussions With Teachers, 164.

<sup>52</sup>Problems, 150; Werke, vol. V, 227.

<sup>53</sup>Werke, vol. IV, 468.

outer appearance, even down to such trivial matters as polishing one's boots every day or using a clean handkerchief, as this created a definite impression.<sup>54</sup> In a lecture to educators he explained, "I must impress them [the children] aesthetically, and so I never once appeared before my pupils in an unbelted blouse or boots that needed a shine. I, too, had to shine, to the best of my ability, of course."<sup>55</sup>

Makarenko summarized his ideas on pedagogical mastery in a description of how he had trained his teachers:

First of all a tutor's character, behavior, special knowledge [another translation reads "knowledge and capacities without which no single educator can be effective"] and his training have to be organized. . . . He must know how to use his voice, how to speak to youngsters. . . . This training is essential. A tutor who cannot control his facial expression or his moods is no good. He must know how to walk, joke, appear gay [cheerful] or angry, and he must be able to handle the pupils. He must behave in such a way that his every movement would be educative, and he must always know exactly what he wants or does not want. If he does not know this, how can he educate others.<sup>56</sup>

### Tradition, "Style and Tone," and Beauty

To Makarenko, fostering traditions, developing what he called "style and tone," and cultivating a sense of beauty were essential educational tasks and a principal responsibility of the educator. He placed tradition, style

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<sup>54</sup>Werke, vol. V, 279; Makarenko, His Life and Work, 260.

<sup>55</sup>Problems, 150; Werke, vol. V, 227.

<sup>56</sup>Problems, 104; Werke, vol. V, 183.



and tone, and the aesthetic dimension at the center of upbringing, ranking them higher than fixed, ready-made methods.

Having recognized the special value of these features that are difficult to measure, yet distinctly human in nature is Makarenko's significant contribution to education in general. Makarenko himself admitted that these features had no "functional value," yet they added important qualities to the life of an educational community.

Makarenko believed that through his own experiences as a teacher he had gained certain insights that should be "propagated" and "systematized." This he did. He gave many stimulating and practical ideas and suggestions to educators regarding (1) the variety of traditions that are of educational value; (2) the importance of style and tone in education and ways to gain a more differentiated perception of them; (3) the formative function of beauty in education and the many ways of creating and integrating aesthetic experiences into the daily life of an educational setting. In discussing Makarenko's ideas, his terminology and use of the words "collective," "colonist," and "upbringing" will be retained. In the context of this presentation, "collective" could be replaced with "school" or "classroom," "colonist" with "student" or "pupil," and "upbringing" with "education" or "schooling."

In his lectures to educators, Makarenko repeatedly

emphasized that the prevailing style and tone in a collective were of great importance in the children's upbringing and that much depended on the kind of style and tone fostered. He regretted that this problem had been given so little consideration in pedagogy. In his opinion, monographs should be written that would deal with what he called "the problem of style" in pedagogical work.<sup>57</sup>

According to Makarenko, the student's whole conduct and demeanor were shaped by the character of the style prevalent in a collective, and by the tone of interaction between one person and another. Style and tone were an expression of the predominant mood, of the tenor of social interaction, and of the collective's inner and outer atmosphere.

Makarenko did not think of style and tone as something difficult to grasp, or as arbitrary and subjective in nature. He was of the opinion that a collective could and should develop a definite style and that it was the educator's urgent task to minister to this responsibility in daily life. As examples, Makarenko delineated several qualities he believed to be characteristic of a healthy style in children's collectives: High on his list was a happy mood, which, like a musical tone, sounded a major key. In fact, Makarenko called this happy mood "major-key." He further differentiated this mood, saying that it meant never-ending life courage, no sinister faces, no sour

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<sup>57</sup>Werke, vol. V, 216, 220; Problems, 139.

expressions, steady readiness for worthwhile deeds, and a lively and sunny nature. Makarenko pointed out that this type of style, the major-key mood, could obviously not be created by looking for special methods. It was to be the result of the collective's entire life and work.<sup>58</sup>

Another important "tone" was struck by having a sense of one's dignity. Again, this sense could not be created in one day; but slowly, over the course of years, it could grow out of a feeling of pride in the collective and awareness of the collective's worth. This sense of dignity would find expression in the colonist's polite and friendly demeanor.<sup>59</sup>

Also important in a collective was a sense of orientation. This orientation sense would enable each person to be fully awake to what was going on around him, even to discern what was not visible, such as perceiving what was going on in another room, and to feel the "tone of life," the "tone of day."<sup>60</sup> Makarenko admits that it would take "much exertion" on the part of both educators and students to cultivate this sense. Ideally, individuals should almost unconsciously perceive, with every fiber of their being, what was happening around them. Makarenko noted that much too often such a sense was completely

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<sup>58</sup>Werke, vol. V, 220; Problems, 143.

<sup>59</sup>Werke, vol. V, 220-21; Problems, 143-44.

<sup>60</sup>Werke, vol. V, 222; Problems, 145.

lacking in men, who seemed to experience only themselves.

The collective's style and tone should also reflect an experience of inner security. The individual child should feel protected against force, arbitrariness, and humiliation. Makarenko conceded that this feeling, too, did not arise by itself and that its fostering required the educator's concentrated efforts.<sup>61</sup>

Makarenko also believed that by creating in the collective a happy style and a wide scope of movement and action, self-control would develop. Self-control, he stressed, did not evolve biologically, but had to be learned. Practicing self-control and restraint was not only asked of the students but also of the educators, who had to transform self-control into a durable habit.<sup>62</sup>

Reflecting on the characteristics of good style in a collective as perceived and described by Makarenko, it becomes evident that he was not speaking merely of outer forms of style and tone, but rather of the acquisition of inner capabilities and attitudes. It also becomes clearer why Makarenko called style a "delicate and perishable substance" that needed "constant care," "daily attention," and required "as much tending as a bed of flowers."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Werke, vol. V, 223; Problems, 146.

<sup>62</sup>Werke, vol. V, 223; Problems, 146.

<sup>63</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 263; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 156.

Makarenko explained that style and tone were "unthinkable without the accumulation of traditions, that is to say of conceptions and habits accepted not by the consciousness alone, but by conscious respect for the experience of older [former] generations [of the colony], for the vast authority of a given collective."<sup>64</sup>

Having rejected the experiences of prerevolutionary pedagogical thinkers and ridiculed imperialistic and bourgeois traditions, it is noteworthy that Makarenko, within the context of his own experience, came to value previously established forms and traditions as a necessary foundation for style and habit formation. In a lecture titled "Speaking of My Experiences" (1938), he expressed his regret over the loss of traditions in the young Soviet pedagogy, the "alarming unsteadiness," and the "rapid shifting of form." He explained that it took sixteen years for him to appreciate traditions, "that is, the experiences of older generations," their creations and achievements.<sup>65</sup> In his lecture "Methods of Upbringing" Makarenko insisted upon the importance of tradition:

Tradition. Nothing cements a collective as strongly as tradition. Cultivating traditions and instilling respect for them is an extremely important part of educational work [sic upbringing]. A school that lacks traditions cannot be a good school, and the best schools I have seen . . . are those that have built

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Werke, vol. V, 271.

some up.<sup>66</sup>

Makarenko assured his listeners, "I did bring in tradition." He described how the boys and girls in the collective knew all of what had become institutionalized traditions, "virtually hundreds," even if they were not written down or recorded; "they used their feelers or something to detect them."<sup>67</sup> Makarenko found that living within a pattern of traditions, the children not only took a special pride in them, they also sought to perfect them.

Makarenko had learned that traditions can form habits, as he illustrated in this example:

There was another rule, a tradition rather. Holding on to the banisters when coming down the stairs was not allowed. I know how it started. It was a fine staircase in a fine building and the steps began to get worn out where people coming up and down clutched the banisters, and so the youngsters passed this rule in order to preserve the staircase. But later they forgot the reason. New pupils would ask: "Why mustn't we hold to the banisters?" The answer was: "Because you've got to rely on your own spinal column." . . . Originally, strengthening the spine had nothing to do with it: the idea was to preserve the staircase.<sup>68</sup>

This example also shows how rules and norms can create forms of conduct. In his lecture, "Worktraining, Relations, Style and Tone in the Collective" Makarenko described how he insisted on such standards of external conduct. He listed some: not to hold on to banisters, not

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<sup>66</sup>Problems, 45-46; Werke, vol. V, 125.

<sup>67</sup>Problems, 46-47; Werke, vol. V, 125-27.

<sup>68</sup>Problems, 52; Werke, vol. V, 132-33.

to lean against the wall, not to talk "like that," (Makarenko gave a demonstration), making sure that one's posture was firm and erect, and answering to orders with "yes, indeed." Makarenko explained that respect for conduct was of great significance and that it was "introduced like this in the collective." He added that such outer firmness and feeling for form determined the inner character of a colonist's conduct.<sup>69</sup>

In bringing traditions to the collective, Makarenko "borrowed from army life," introducing some military practices into the daily routine.<sup>70</sup> P. F. W. Preece, observing a striking resemblance between military traditions developed in the Gorky Colony and those of English public Schools, summarized this practice aptly:

Many of the Gorky Colony's traditions were consciously derived from military rules. The terms 'commander' and 'detachment,' and the practices of saluting and giving reports, all had a strong military flavor. There were traditions associated with the flag which was given an orchestral salute on being borne into general meetings and was guarded by a sentry during marches. One is reminded of the traditions in some English public schools which have been awarded regimental colors. Makarenko insisted upon military

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<sup>69</sup>Werke, vol. V, V, 224; Problems, 147.

<sup>70</sup>Makarenko stressed that he established the tradition of militarization "as a game." In his words: "This [militarization] must not be a repetition of an army unit's rules. By no manner of means must it be a copying and imitating of something. I am against perpetual marching. . . It looks bad and is quite unnecessary. . . . My collective was militarized to a certain degree. To begin with, the terminology we used was somewhat military, for instance, "detachment commander." In Problems, 49; Werke, vol. v, 129-130.

smartness and opined that 'a collective which you dress well is 50 per cent easier to manage.'<sup>71</sup>

Makarenko felt strongly that the choice and quality of children's clothes should be "so beautiful and so colorful" that everybody would be amazed. He told his lecture audiences that the aesthetic side of life in a collective could not be overestimated, observing that it was precisely the pedagogues who suffer "from a certain nihilism" in matters of aesthetics. In a written statement for the Dzerzhinsky Commune he gave this direction:

Never forget this axiom: Striving toward the beautiful, being firmly implanted into everyone by nature, is the best lever for turning one around toward culture.

Building upon beauty means to build securely. Beauty is a most powerful magnet, and it is not only a beautiful face or the beautiful shape of a human being that has an appealing effect, but also a beautiful deed, a beautiful concert, a piece of embroidery and even a beautiful soldier cut out of paper.<sup>72</sup>

Makarenko felt it to be most important to beautify the collective in an outwardly visible way. That is why he built a hothouse, at a time when the collective was very poor, to plant flowers that would be lovingly tended by colonists and used to adorn the collective: there were flowers "not only in the bed-and-dining rooms, in class or

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<sup>71</sup>P. F. W. Preece, "Public Schools - Bourgeois or Progressive?" Education for Teaching 79 (Summer 1969): 45.

<sup>72</sup>Makarenko-Archive Nr. 84, cited in Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 256-57.



working rooms, but also in the landings and staircases."<sup>73</sup>

Makarenko regarded cleanliness and personal hygiene, by their contributing to the dignity of human life, as an aspect of beauty. "You see," he explained in a lecture, "flowers and clothes, cleanliness in all rooms and footwear, all that must be present in a collective."<sup>74</sup> Makarenko was quite specific: not only one's teeth, but one's shoes had to be clean; clothes had to be free of dust; there were specific requirements regarding hair style. If someone was "caught uncombed," the person in charge of the sanitary commission would appear with a pair of scissors and the warning, "Go to the hairdresser."<sup>75</sup> Makarenko's demands for cleanliness were uncompromising.

Countless examples of cleanliness and order could be seen in the colony. One of Makarenko's accounts gives a flavor of the demanding standards set for the children:

There was for example the table. One can put a wax-cloth over it, that is fine and hygienic. One can put all sorts of things on top of it, wipe over, and everything is clean again. No way! Only a white table cloth! Only a white tablecloth can bring about the habit to eat mannerly, a wax cloth invites letting oneself go. During the first days, a white tablecloth will inevitably be soiled and full of stains. After half a year it will remain clean. If there is no white tablecloth on the table, it will be impossible to teach

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<sup>73</sup>Werke, vol. V, 228; Problems, 150.

<sup>74</sup>Werke, vol. v, 228; Problems, 151.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

mannerly eating habits.<sup>76</sup>

Makarenko saw the life of the collective filled with countless small matters, what he called "little things," that, if well overseen and coordinated, would comprise an aesthetic style of collective living. Makarenko stressed that these fundamental details not only had to be carried through consistently, they had to be well planned.

Makarenko was so emphatic that the collective should be imbued with beauty because he saw in beauty, as he explained in a lecture, both "the result of and the measure for style." This being the case, beauty could also be appraised as a "factor that has an educational effect."<sup>77</sup>

### Perspectives

"Perspectives" in the sense of having a joyful outlook, a happy anticipation of the coming day, and envisioning a hopeful future was a central notion in Makarenko's work with the besprizorniki. Some educators attribute Makarenko's pedagogical success mainly to his having devoted much of his efforts providing joyful perspectives for his colonists.<sup>78</sup>

Makarenko often stated that man could not live in this world without something joyous and that the

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<sup>76</sup>Werke, vol. V, 229; Problems, 152.

<sup>77</sup>Werke, vol. V, 226; Problems, 149.

<sup>78</sup>Wendt, "Möglichst hohe Forderungen," in Wege der Forschung, 512-13.

anticipation of joy was the true stimulus in human life.<sup>79</sup> Rüttenauer considers such an insight worthy of every humanist.<sup>80</sup> As described in chapter six, Makarenko planned joyful experiences and integrated them into the educational life of his colonies, developing a whole system of intentional "perspectives." He spoke of there being an "interesting line" of gratification, one that proceeds "from the primitive gratification provided by a piece of gingerbread to the satisfaction based upon the deepest sense of duty."<sup>81</sup>

As described in the previous chapter, Makarenko's system of perspectives was adaptable to different age groups and levels of maturity. In his terminology, the "near perspectives," those most important for the young child, provided immediate gratification of physical comforts and something personally pleasant. The "middle perspectives" included planning and preparing events such as festivals, excursions, or a vacation for all students. Typically, the actual event would take place at a future time, thus heightening the joyous anticipation. The "distant perspectives," which pertained to the most mature students, included life goals and career aspirations, interest in the

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<sup>79</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 3, 283; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 170.

<sup>80</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 247-48.

<sup>81</sup>GW Marburg Edition, vol. 5, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 170; The Road to Life, vol. 3, 284.

colony's future and, finally, consideration of a joyous future for the whole Soviet Union. Makarenko stressed that all perspectives had to be achievable, that primitive and egoistic joys had to be transformed into more selfless forms of gratification, and that ultimately total harmony between personal and societal perspectives could be achieved.

In the Makarenko literature, scholars have expressed caution in using such perspectives within education. Makarenko himself warned that the near perspectives, if built solely on the principle of pleasure and physical comfort, would teach the child undue thirst for amusement and dissipation.<sup>82</sup> Rüttenauer voiced concern lest an emphasis on these perspectives devalue the present day because of their focus on the morrow. She thinks that this kind of orientation might generate in the young an attitude of not caring much for today if tomorrow will be better.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, Nastainczyk discusses whether the worth of the present moment might not be "sacrificed" for the future, as the student's striving is directed toward a more ideal tomorrow.<sup>84</sup> Perspectives in the sense of Makarenko's thinking raises, according to Rüttenauer, an additional question: Can something as spontaneous as joy be planned

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<sup>82</sup>Werke, vol. v, 82.

<sup>83</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 224.

<sup>84</sup>Wofgang Nastainczyk, Makarenkos Sowjetpädagogik [Makarenko's Soviet pedagogy] (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1963), 154-55.

and organized? Pointing out that a situation of hardship and destitution may represent a pedagogical advantage in that it makes the student more receptive to joyful experiences, nonetheless, one cannot plan and organize the manner in which a student might receive a joyful experience.<sup>85</sup>

While it may not be possible to organize joy into an educational system, several principles of Makarenko's use of perspectives may nevertheless be of value to present-day educators and significant to pedagogy. Current events and literature confirm that in today's culture many children live in environments that offer little or no joy, few if any prospects for the future, and almost no vision of long-term goals. Because many young people have lost faith in the future, they turn to drug abuse, violence, and crimes against people and property. Similarly, (at least in the beginning of the Gorky Colony), Makarenko and his colonists, having lived in a shattered society under conditions of utmost deprivation, experienced more intensely the need for joy as a basic human need; and as joyful experiences were not provided by the larger culture, Makarenko, intentionally and consciously, had to provide such opportunities.

For many children today there are numerous occasions for joyful experiences, within their families, schools, and a variety of religious, social, and cultural organizations.

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<sup>85</sup>Rüttenauer, A. S. Makarenko, 224.

quite probably, intentionally laying the ground for joyful experiences and cultivating and nurturing a positive outlook on the future have a vitalizing effect among poor inner-city children. In any event, educators may find useful the following of Makarenko's ideas and considerations regarding perspectives:

- Joyful outlooks for the near or distant future must be clear to understand and realizable, and not based on utopian ideas or fantasy. Unclear or weak perspectives have little likelihood of being effective.
- Joyful prospects can be great incentives; they can stimulate initiative, mobilize and energize student activities, and enhance cooperation.
- The student's overall readiness, willingness, and preparedness to join group activities increases with the prospect of a joyful event or experience.
- The so-called "middle perspectives" lend themselves to group activities involving mutual planning, joint organizing, and executing, and shared participation, thus strengthening member's sense of belonging.
- Perspectives can give students a sense of moving on in life, of advancing toward a concrete goal.
- Expectation and hope for an anticipated joy provide a gratifying pre-experience and keep the student in motion.
- The gratifying experience of a humanly worthy joy may

slowly replace and transform egoistic or primitive forms of joy.

- The student may learn to experience joy not through diversions and amusement alone, but through work and success in accomplishments.

### Image of Man and its Importance in Education

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Makarenko espoused an unrestricted faith in mankind and firmly believed in humans' inherent goodness and boundless potential for moral growth into worthy beings. He viewed any deviant personal characteristics to be caused by adverse environmental conditions that could be overcome if the individual was returned to a healthy and stable life situation. Makarenko was critical of the pedologists, who, according to him, obtained their image of the child through tests and experiments. Such an approach was antithetic to his thinking, because he believed that the best way to get to know a child was by working with the child and by observing the child in its daily tasks. Though Makarenko admitted that it was often difficult to see the good in mankind, as this was usually obscured in the conflicts and petty battles of everyday life, he nevertheless was convinced that human goodness had to be projected and that every pedagogue was obliged to do so.

In reading Herbert Kohl's account of his experiences as a teacher in a ghetto classroom in Harlem (New York), and

his encounter with other teachers' views of their pupils, Makarenko's recommendation that teachers believe in the goodness of young people seems most timely. Kohl observed the following:

I attended to teachers' conversations, listened to them abuse the children until I could no longer go into the teachers' lunchroom. The most frequent epithet they used in describing the children was "animals." After a while the word "animal" came to epitomize for me most teachers' ambiguous relations to ghetto children--the scorn and the fear, the condescension yet the acknowledgment of some imagined power and unpredictability. I recognized some of that in myself, but never reached the sad point of denying my fear and uncertainty by projecting fearsome and unpredictable characteristics on the children and using them in class as some last primitive weapon.<sup>86</sup>

Kohl commented that the myth of children as "animals," the belief that they were not really human at all but wild, undisciplined, formless, and chaotic, and the fear that they may be uncontrollable, was "hanging" over all the ghetto schools in which he had visited or taught.<sup>87</sup> He found that such a myth, (elsewhere he called it "preconceptions") prevented teachers from recognizing and believing in students' true abilities. The example of Alice illustrates his point. Alice was regarded by the teachers as a "troublemaker" or "disturbed." Kohl found, however, that Alice "blossomed" when she was offered "something substantial," such as a serious novel or the opportunity to

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<sup>86</sup>Herbert Kohl, 36 Children (New York: The New York American Library, 1967), 187.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 30.



"write honestly."<sup>88</sup>

Like Kohl, Makarenko, due to his optimistic image of man, refused to look at a child as disturbed, troublesome, or delinquent. He even went so far as to ignore their crime records and court reports. His view of the child as inherently good enabled him to meet his students with confidence and trust, which in turn had an influence on his educational approach. The following example, told by Makarenko in his "Poem" (The Road to Life) illustrates this point. The story took place at a time Makarenko was very troubled by Semyon Karabanov, a colonist, who could not stop stealing. Makarenko reported:

Two weeks later I summoned him, and said simply:

"Here's a power of attorney. Go and get five hundred rubles from the Financial Department."

Semyon opened his eyes and his mouth, turned deathly pale, and at last brought out awkwardly:

"Five hundred rubles! And then what?"

"Nothing!" I replied, looking into the drawer of my table. "Just bring it to me."

"Am I to go on horse?"

"Of course! Here's a revolver in case you need it."

I handed Semyon the very revolver which I had taken from Mityagin's [colonist] belt in the autumn, still with the three cartridges in it. Karabanov took the revolver mechanically, eyed it wildly [the Marburg translation reads "shyly"], thrust it with a rapid movement into his pocket and left the room without a word. Ten minutes later I heard the clatter of hoofs on the stones and a rider galloped past my window.

Towards evening, Semyon entered my office. . . . In silence he laid a bundle of notes and the revolver on the table.

I picked up the notes and asked in the most indifferent and inexpressive tones I could muster:

"Did you count it?"

"Yes."

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 185.

I threw the whole bundle carelessly into my drawer.  
 "Thanks! Go and have dinner."<sup>89</sup>

Kalabalin, (one of the colonists) had a similar experience. In his reminiscences he told how Makarenko, after having picked him up at jail, asked him to collect some staples at a warehouse, while he, Makarenko, had to attend to other official matters. Such trust confused Kalabalin. In his words:

Straight out of prison and such trust--him sending me out for the bread and the sugar. Perhaps it was some kind of test or other? A trap? I even entertained the idea that Makarenko was not quite all there. Otherwise how on earth could he have entrusted such riches to me. . . . It was only many years later that we [the colonists] realized how through the tremendous trust shown to us . . . Makarenko had been able to bring into play again those human characteristics in us which had been dormant previously."<sup>90</sup>

Makarenko's positive image of man also had a direct effect of how he approached and treated the colonists. In his book Learning to Live, he wrote that children "are living their lives" and should be treated as comrades and citizens. "[You] have to respect and keep in view their right to enjoy life and their duty to bear responsibility."<sup>91</sup> In this statement lie two of Makarenko's cardinal concepts, in fact, his fundamental principle: make demands on a person and respect a person. In his words: "The utmost possible

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<sup>89</sup>The Road to Life, vol. 1, 340-41; GW Marburg Edition, vol. 3, Ein Pädagogisches Poem, 200-201.

<sup>90</sup>Semyon Kalabalin, "How Anton Makarenko Prepared us for Life," in Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 167, 169.

<sup>91</sup>Learning to Live, 199.

demands on a person, but at the same time the utmost possible respect for him."<sup>92</sup> Makarenko believed that by placing demands on someone we demonstrate our respect for his or her strengths and capabilities.<sup>93</sup>

Interestingly, Herbert Kohl made a similar observation. After a reading lesson, he agreed to a student's request to take a ten-minute break to "talk," with the understanding to return to work thereafter. Kohl describes what followed and the lesson that he learned:

After the ten minutes I tried to bring the children back to work. They resisted, tested my determination. I am convinced that a failure of will at the moment would have been disastrous. It was necessary to compel the children to return to work, not due to my "authority" or "control" but because they were expected to honor the bargain. They listened, and at that moment I learned something of the toughness, consistency, and ability to demand and give respect that enables children to listen to adults without feeling abused or brutalized and, therefore, becoming defiant."<sup>94</sup>

### Conclusion

Though many Western educators have expressed the belief that Makarenko gave a lesson "from which we too may learn," there is little in the literature that deals with just what that contribution might be. It is commonly agreed

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<sup>92</sup>Makarenko, cited by Cohen, "On the Marxist Philosophy of Education," 211. See also A. S. Makarenko in "Schlussfolgerungen," PSOW XXXI, 4 (1983): 82; Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 376; Werke, vol. VII, 184 and 326; vol. V, 150; Problems, 70.

<sup>93</sup>Problems, 71; Werke, vol. V, 150.

<sup>94</sup>Kohl, 36 Children, 21.

among Western scholars and educators that Makarenko's system could neither be transplanted wholesale nor indiscriminately applied without careful adaptations and qualifications.

Having explored Makarenko's educational thought and practice with the question in mind, are his ideas applicable to education in general? some surprising findings surfaced.

As expected, Makarenko's general contribution to education cannot be found in what he had to say about formal classroom instruction. He neither developed special techniques nor was he in favor of abstractly conceived educational theories or ready-made methods. Since he was a man of practice who believed in his own experiences, to appreciate fully his views regarding the nature of education, one must consider the specific social, cultural, and political context in which he worked and in which his educational ideas and practices arose.

Makarenko had assumed educational responsibility in his colony for homeless war orphans three years after the Russian Revolution, under a new regime and a new ideology, in the midst of civil war, in a shattered society that was bereft of traditions and social norms. There was one hope only that Makarenko shared with many Soviets, the dream of building a better world.

His colonists were vagrant youth, unaccustomed to social norms and expectations, mostly illiterate and ignorant of any form of human culture. With social

conditions at their rawest level, Makarenko was confronted not only with the task of providing for the rudimentary needs of daily survival, but also with having to mobilize the cooperation of his defiant colonists, and awaken some social understanding, as well as trying to improve their self-centered, anarchistic behavior and bring order and structure into their formless lives.

Many Western educators see three paramount features in Makarenko's educational system: collective training, military discipline, and productive work in factories or on farms. These features represent Makarenko's programs and practices in their broadest terms and grew out of the reality of his specific circumstances. On closer examination of Makarenko's ideas and practices, however, a complex and differentiated picture appears, revealing insights into what he believed to be educational.

Makarenko found that in the extremely primitive conditions of the colony he had first of all to establish basic norms of civilized behavior as well as elementary virtues, such as honesty, reliability, decency, cooperation, a sense of duty and responsibility, loyalty, and a sense of order and cleanliness, norms traditionally provided by the family, the community, or society.

Pondering the extremely hostile conditions that prevailed in Makarenko's first colony, particularly in the beginning year or so, it must be surprising to any educator

to read Bruce Baker's account of Makarenko's achievements:

Makarenko was able to take a number of ill-clad, ill-tempered, and often violent individuals and, in a relatively short period of time, transform them into "new" men and women. They found a purpose, a sense of order and direction to their lives; they acquired habits of discipline and cooperation; . . . Instead of fighting and stealing, they engaged in programs of cooperative, productive labor. . . . At the same time, they were in the process of preparing themselves academically for further education and further work."<sup>5</sup>

But what lay behind this radical transformation?

Makarenko's answer would refer to his "instrument of education," the collective, and education in the collective that had enabled him to bring about such amazing changes. But that still would not tell us whether collective education could succeed in Western societies. As mentioned, this question has challenged Western educators, but without their affirming an answer.

What has been of absorbing interest in studying Makarenko's educational ideas and practices is the attention given to what he called the "little things" or the "small matters" of education. He acknowledged the great value of such matters as keeping educational methods mobile and responsive to a given moment or to the needs of a specific child; being in control of one's voice, facial expression, and movement because they have their own, albeit hard to measure, effect on pupils; considering the stabilizing value of traditions and their formative effect on students'

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<sup>5</sup>Baker, "Anton Makarenko and the Idea of the Collective," 286.

conduct, bearing, and behavior; being aware of the harmonizing influence that style and a good tone of interaction can have on the young; knowing the educational importance of beauty and aesthetic surroundings in the daily lives of children; being cognizant of the importance of joy in a child's life of providing students with the anticipation of a joyful prospect and a vision for the future; being aware of the importance of sustaining a positive image of man because of its fundamental impact on the child, on the teacher, and on the educational process.

It seems to me that herein lies Makarenko's contribution to education in general: his having brought to consciousness and given voice to values and practices that are vital to human growth, their absence severely depriving the child as a human being. Though traditionally the fostering of these basic human habits and values has not been a major function of the classroom, it seems that families or society can no longer always be counted on to provide such a grounding. A teacher, by being aware of the human appeal and educational value of what Makarenko called the "little things" in education, can make an indispensable contribution to the child's all-round growth and development.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AFTERMATH: A REINTERPRETATION OF MAKARENKO

The Marburg researchers, in their search for the "real" or "historic" Makarenko, were able to shed new light on his life, work, and ideas.<sup>1</sup> They could correct and complete the inherited Makarenko image, canonized during the time of his apotheosis in the 1940s (see chapter five) and principally shaped by Soviet biographers in the 1940s and 1950s. The Marburgers found, in Dunstan's words, "a private man with a personal history (partly unhappy and partly unmentionable) and a public man who was far more controversial in his life time than is generally believed."<sup>2</sup> In light of these new findings (the most essential ones have been discussed in different chapters of this dissertation, particularly in chapters two, three and five) it will be possible more accurately to re-assess who Makarenko really was--whether a great pedagogue, as he was often portrayed, or a political ideologue and military disciplinarian--and

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<sup>1</sup>Froese, "Der Historische Makarenko," in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 9-14. Froese uses the terms "historical," (p. 10), "the historically real existing Makarenko," (p. 12), and "the reconstruction of such a 'real' Makarenko." (p. 14.)

<sup>2</sup>John Dunstan, "Demythologizing Makarenko," 28.



determine to what extent his educational ideas are applicable outside the Soviet Union and in nontotalitarian systems.

The following reinterpretation will address both questions. Being aware of Patrick Alston's warning that "in posterity the neatly balanced academic view can be the most misleading of all," this reinterpretation does not claim to have sorted out all the incongruities surrounding Makarenko or to have answered all the questions.<sup>3</sup> The author, while basing her reinterpretation on the findings of the Marburg editors, is alone responsible for the views expressed here. It is also important to note that further data concerning Makarenko's convictions may come to light as Soviet archives become more accessible.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>P. L. Alston, "Watch on the Elbe," 51.

<sup>4</sup>According to the Soviet scholar Valentin Kumarin, there are ten or twelve of Makarenko's notebooks that were in the possession of Makarenko's wife, and disappeared after her death. So far they have not been located, even though Kumarin is convinced that they were not destroyed. In Hillig, ed., Opuscula Makarenkiana, 9-11.

### In Search of the Historically "True" Makarenko

The first part of this reinterpretation will focus on Makarenko's childhood and youth, highlighting those events and experiences that had a formative effect on his personality, thus bringing us closer to an understanding of who Makarenko really was. Following this examination, the discussion will focus on Makarenko's adult years, underscoring relevant findings regarding his pedagogical, political, and literary pursuits that will contribute to defining the true Makarenko. Some of Makarenko's lesser known and less positive character traits will also be examined. To the extent possible, an attempt will be made to relate new findings to Makarenko's educational ideas and practices. The chapter will close with a discussion on the general applicability of Makarenko's educational ideas.

The key to understanding the kind of person Makarenko really was comes, at least in part, from Makarenko himself. In a letter to Antonina Pavlovna Sugak, (a former colleague from the railway school in Kriukov), written from the Gorky Colony on March 24, 1923, Makarenko explained in answer to her question of what the Gorky Colony had done for him, "I am quite a different person now, possessing a sense of direction, an iron will, persistence, boldness and

finally confidence in myself."<sup>5</sup> With this self-portrait, Makarenko identified distinct character traits that he had felt he had acquired at the Gorky Colony. We are told that these traits had previously not been part of Makarenko's makeup and that his self-confidence had essentially unfolded in the Gorky Colony.

Because Soviet biographers had endowed Makarenko from an early age with nothing but sterling qualities, portraying him as a wonder child and, subsequently, as an unusually successful teacher at the railroad schools, some doubt arises as to what kind of a person he was before 1920, when he took charge of the Gorky Colony and a transformation of his personality occurred. Turning to Makarenko's life before 1920, a thirty-two-year period that Soviet biographers have viewed mainly in terms of apprenticeship preparatory to his great pedagogical experiment, we find, as Hillig points out, that biographers had not fully differentiated Makarenko's prerevolutionary years.<sup>6</sup> Yet these years constituted two-thirds of his life span and accounted for most of Makarenko's formative experiences, including his struggle to formulate his own world view amid political and social upheaval. Therefore, the pre-Gorky Colony years are crucial to the understanding of Makarenko's character. Through the Marburg findings, Makarenko's

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<sup>5</sup>Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 79.

<sup>6</sup>Hillig, ed., MM III, Preface, 5.

childhood, youth, and young adulthood have been given a new and significantly more detailed perspective, revealing not only previously unknown, formative aspects in his upbringing, but providing also a much more delineated portrait of the pre-revolutionary man.

### The Early Years Reconsidered

The social status of Makarenko's family is an important example of biographical misinformation that needed correction. Makarenko was not the son of a poor, illiterate proletarian laborer, as he himself and early Soviet biographers had insisted, but the child of a proud, class-conscious and skilled worker at the Russian railroad. Compared with others of the working class, railroad workers were a relatively well-to-do, privileged group. Makarenko's father, a pious, educated man, was loyal to the tsar and, in 1913, was declared an "honorary citizen" of the Russian empire. Holding conservative, monarchist views (Makarenko portrayed him in his novel Honor as a Bolshevik sympathizer), he was in outspoken opposition to the revolution. According to Vitalii (Makarenko's younger brother), their father never concerned himself with politics and understood nothing of it. The names "Bolsheviki" or "Lenin" became known to the Makarenko household only after the revolution of 1917.

This antipolitical climate within the family is worth mentioning as it may well have shaped Makarenko's own

political posture, described by the Marburgers as open for political and social change before the revolution, but guarded against the political developments in the Ukraine under Soviet power. Particularly noteworthy within this context is a reference to Makarenko's brother Vitalii, who, as an officer in the tsarist army, fought against the Red Army during the Civil War and emigrated to France after the revolution.

Considering Makarenko's conservative and orthodox upbringing, it is perhaps not surprising that he was furious when a colonist once addressed him with the familiar "thou" (see chapter three). The Makarenko children had at all times to address their parents courteously, using the formal Russian pronoun for "you," a model Makarenko may have unconsciously drawn on when confronted with his uprooted charges. During his entire career with the besprizorniki, Makarenko upheld, without exception, a formal style of behavior and proper modes of conduct amongst co-workers, teachers, and colonists.

So much for Makarenko's conservative social origins and the lasting effect it evidently had on him and on his educational approaches. Drawing on new material regarding his childhood, it is possible to identify certain early experiences and events that seemed to have shaped his character and temperament in an enduring way. Two circumstances stand out: Makarenko's own physical

afflictions--he suffered from chronic colds, earaches, scrofula and severe myopia that caused him endless distress and misery--and the tragic fate of his younger sister Natalya, who died at the age of eight.

Because of his delicate nature and general lack of vitality as a child, Makarenko's mother protected her son from undue exposure to the outdoors; as a result, Anton spent much of his childhood indoors, isolated from his peers who added emotional distress to his physical woes by ridiculing him for his clumsy and uncoordinated ways. Although Makarenko had two siblings besides Natalya--a sister seven years his senior who had left home at an early age, and Vitalii, seven years younger, whom he, according to Vitalii, did not notice--Natalya was much closer in age to Anton. At her birth Makarenko was three years old, and eleven when she died. This proximity of their ages seems noteworthy as it suggests that Natalya was a companion to Anton until her accident at the age of two, which left her paralyzed until her death at the age of eight. Anton must have been deeply affected by her affliction and early death.

These two decisive circumstances obviously left their mark on Anton, for Vitalii described his brother as earnest, thoughtful, inward, lonely, and withdrawn. According to Vitalii's testimony, Anton's tendency to seriousness never disappeared as Anton grew older, and his temperament remained reticent and melancholic. Maybe too

soon, for a healthy childhood, Anton turned to books; absorbed by his reading (he could read at the age of five), he failed to make friends. While Anton's early and serious interest in reading has been viewed as a great marvel by his biographers, the safer world of books was also a refuge, an escape from the raucous games and ridicule of comrades. Makarenko's interest in reading and boundless intellectual curiosity, (both well documented and much applauded in the Soviet literature), and which remained a central characteristic throughout Makarenko's entire life, can undoubtedly be linked to his restricted childhood.

Given the serious and confining events of Makarenko's childhood, (one is left with a view of Anton as a sensitive, physically not very robust person, needy of protection and given to introspection) and their enduring effect on his mental and physical disposition, several questions arise: 1. Did Makarenko's sensitive, responsive nature render him more compassionate, tender-hearted and understanding toward the suffering of others? 2. Did his shortsightedness lead to feelings of insecurity, thus diminishing his self-confidence and willingness to take risks? 3. Was the baffling reaction to his brief military service in 1916--Anton had panicked over the crude barracks life and the soldiers' intolerable manners--the result of his refined nature and, possibly, an indication of a lingering need for protection? These questions have yet to

be fully answered.

### The Adolescent Years

New findings regarding Makarenko's adolescence and young adulthood contribute significantly to understanding who Makarenko really was. Soviet biographers' portrayal of Makarenko as a great talent is certainly true in terms of his academic achievements. He earned top grades in the municipal school in Kremenchug as well as at the Poltava Teachers' Institute. On the other hand we also learn through Vitalii's account that at the same time he was excelling academically, Anton experienced deep feelings of insecurity and emotional turmoil, largely related to uncertainties over his self-image. His struggle for a sense of identity is illustrated by Vitalii's description of Anton, at the age of seventeen, imitating Chekhov by using a cane and pince-nez. Anton was disturbed by his unattractive appearance. He suffered from not being handsome and turned this personal tragedy into an overriding concern. His short stature, his small gray eyes and his overly large nose caused him much unhappiness; to compensate, he spent a large portion of his generous teacher's salary on expensive, fashionable suits.

Vitalii revealed a convincing reason for his brother's emotional turmoil: from an early age on, Anton greatly admired women and he easily fell in love. This inclination persisted, even after Makarenko had entered a



marriage-like relationship with Elizaveta Fedorovna Grigorovich, wife of the local priest and eight years his senior. As this affair caused a serious rift between Makarenko and his father that never fully healed, one wonders why Anton sustained this unusual liaison for so long. Did he still need to lean on someone? Did he need the continual warmth and support of an older, more mature person? Did he seek approval and comfort from Elizaveta's motherly and devoted nature?

In addition to Makarenko's well-known and well-established character traits--Makarenko presented himself, particularly in his "Poem" (The Road to Life) as a humorous, warm, excitable, courageous, and persistent man--must be added what Dunstan calls "a certain deviousness and a self-righteousness taken to extremes."<sup>7</sup> Not only did Makarenko's biographers wish to present him in the most favorable light--they gilded his image to project the desired effect of Makarenko as the founder of Soviet pedagogy, the great pioneer of Soviet education--but Makarenko also stretched the truth to portray himself to his advantage.

For example, based on the Marburg findings, Makarenko misrepresented the grounds for his having been selected by the authorities to establish and direct a colony for law-breaking youth, as well as the actual reasons for his dismissal from the Gorky Colony. In his "Poem" (The

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<sup>7</sup>Dunstan, "Demythologizing Makarenko," 28.

Road to Life), Makarenko portrayed himself as challenged by the education authorities to assume this new responsibility. In reality, his appointment was an emergency solution on the part of the Commissariat for Education, which had turned to Makarenko only after Elizaveta Fedorovna Grigorovich (Makarenko's long-time intimate friend) had declined the offer herself. She was nonetheless instrumental in securing this post for Makarenko. (See chapter three.) Also in the "Poem," Makarenko was somewhat misleading in his version of why he was forced to depart from the Gorky Colony. (See chapter five.) While he presented his dismissal as the result solely of a conflict over his methods between himself and the Ukrainian Commissariat of Public Education, according to sources consulted by the Marburg editors, there were two other reasons for Makarenko having been dismissed from his directorship. Nowhere in his writings did Makarenko mention these additional circumstances.

It appears that at the time of forced Ukrainization in all areas of public life (in the Ukrainian SSR), followed by restriction of the Russian language in favor of Ukrainian, Makarenko resisted and refused to adopt the Ukrainian language. According to Hillig, Makarenko's recalcitrant posture must have inevitably led to serious conflicts with the authorities and contributed to his dismissal. Another less commonly known circumstance, also decisive in Makarenko's dismissal from the Gorky Colony and

concealed by him, centered around an accusation by the local Komsomol (young communists) organization in Kharkov, that the Gorky Colony and other children's homes applied corporal punishment. This charge culminated in a request by the authorities that Makarenko be removed from his post and replaced with a Party member.

According to the Marburg scholars (and discussed in chapter five), Makarenko was also deceptive regarding his relationship with the Ukrainian GPU (secret police). As it turns out, this alliance was not always as harmonious as Makarenko depicted it to be. (The GPU, in 1927, had offered Makarenko a position as director of the newly founded Dzerzhinsky Commune, a position he assumed full time in 1928). In his "Poem" Makarenko had highly praised the Cheka-men, as he named the GPU, for their cooperative and effective working style; in his essay "Maxim Gorky's Part in My Life" he gratefully remembered the Cheka-men for having "picked up his homeless pedagogy" (after he was fired from the Gorky Colony) and for bringing it to its full unfolding.<sup>8</sup> In reality, Makarenko encountered serious conflicts with the Dzerzhinsky Commune's board of governors, (his GPU overlords), over questions of programming and community activities, which resulted in his demotion as director of the Commune and, finally, in his transfer to Kiev.

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<sup>8</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 133.

One last example illustrating Makarenko's implied deviousness concerns the source of some of his educational ideas and practices. There is evidence that in the beginning of the Gorky Colony Makarenko had models to guide him, in addition to Gorky, whom he acknowledged as his only master. Makarenko "overlooked" these models and examples, insisting that he alone forged his educational principles entirely out of his own efforts. Based on Vitalii's reports, however, it is apparent that Makarenko drew on some activities and experiments that he and his brother had conducted at the railway higher elementary school in Kriukov between 1917 and 1919. These experiments encompassed agricultural labor brigades formed by the students, a theatre circle for lay people, and military exercises, all of which Makarenko subsequently employed at the Gorky Colony.

The latter is worth considering further. Vitalii had introduced military exercises in his gymnastic lessons as a form of physical training and Makarenko, perhaps still under the shock of his own military experience in Kiev some eighteen months earlier, had opposed such a regimented work out. He eventually agreed to the military drill and to marching to music with a flying banner, because he saw how much the children liked this routine. Later, in the Gorky Colony, he reintroduced military training and integrated it into the daily routine as he observed the positive effect it

had on the behavior and conduct of his students. But Makarenko's use of military practice seems to have been motivated more by the results of practical experience with the colonists than by his "military nature."

The other model for Makarenko's work with the besprizorniki, mentioned by him only once, and then almost derogatorily, was the Korolenko Colony. This colony was well known in and around the Ukraine for its successful program. Founded one year before the Gorky Colony's opening and situated in the immediate neighborhood, its educational principles were founded on productive labor and collective education--concepts similar to those Makarenko developed later on in the Gorky Colony. One cannot help wondering whether Makarenko used the Korolenko Colony as a model but did not want to give credit for his ideas to anyone else. This impression is compounded by another finding: Hillig was able to locate the published writings of Soviet pedagogical scientist and psychologist H. Vascenko, who had met Makarenko frequently in the 1920s and was familiar with both the Gorky Colony and with Makarenko's pedagogical beliefs. According to Vascenko's written testimony, Makarenko not only lacked thorough knowledge in the area of pedagogy which may help explain Makarenko's mocking attitude toward pedagogical theory, he also overestimated his own capacities, to the point that, in Vascenko's words, "he

[Makarenko] had pedagogy start with himself." This self-righteous aspect of Makarenko's character will be examined later in this chapter.

These examples illustrate Makarenko's tendency to rearrange certain facts in his favor. Hillig also found that Makarenko was given to exaggerations and that he stretched the truth in his favor when giving biographical information. In one instance, he described his father as illiterate, a Bolshevik sympathizer, and a poor laborer, as this was the preferred image after the revolution. However, before passing a final judgment on these character blemishes, one must consider other circumstances, namely that Makarenko, recurrently in his writings and lectures, openly admitted to mistakes, failures, and to his own doubts and uncertainties regarding the rightness of his pedagogical ideas and practices. Some of his distortions and exaggerations, particularly those regarding his social origin and references to the GPU, must be regarded within the social and political context of the time and his fabrications viewed as "inventions" for political reasons.

To this critical appraisal of Makarenko's character traits must be added some other surprising and unexpected features that Vaschenko mentioned in one of his writings. First, commenting on Makarenko's arrogant and self-righteous behavior:

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 126-27.

Makarenko himself gave me the impression of someone very self-assured, that is to say, of an extremely narcissistic person. During his appearances, [as a speaker at professional conferences] one clearly felt his consciousness of superiority and his contempt for the other participants at the conference.<sup>10</sup>

Later in the same report, Vascenko acknowledged Makarenko as an unusual person with great capabilities, but censured him for his lack of objectivity and self-criticism:

Makarenko's life and my immediate acquaintance with him enabled me to characterize him, at least tentatively, as a person as well as an educator, but also to compare him with other pedagogues who dealt with neglected children.

The first thing that I must notice here is the fact that Makarenko was indeed no average person. He possessed great capabilities both as a writer and as an experienced pedagogue. Considering, however, his theoretical views in the area of pedagogy, his extreme self-righteousness bordering on narcissism, and also his lack of objectivity and the absence of a modicum of self-critical attitude towards his own thoughts, all this had a harmful effect on him. This may possibly be the reason for Makarenko's preference to present his pedagogical beliefs predominately in belletristic form.<sup>11</sup>

The final blow came with Vascenko's charge that Makarenko lacked feelings of compassion, something so crucial in working with needy and neglected children.

One would assume that such a person particularly in his practical tasks would be guided above all by his feelings, first and foremost by a compassion for neglected children and their suffering. . . . Yet, in reality, this was not the case. Makarenko was a strong-willed person who in his work was guided more by his reason than by his feelings. Besides, he was

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<sup>10</sup>Hillig, "Zur zeitgenössischen Aufnahme," in PSOW, XXVII, 3 (1979): 75.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

always reserved and gave the impression of an extremely egocentric person. Such people are not guided by feelings of compassion. Their own ego comes first. . . . There is no reason to compare Makarenko with an enthusiast, a visionary, and lesser yet with Pestalozzi, who, in his pedagogical tasks, was above all guided by a deep compassion for the homeless and unfortunate children. . . . Makarenko was not such a person.<sup>12</sup>

This weighty conclusion, offered by a professional colleague who considered himself well qualified to pronounce such grave judgments, may provide a more realistic view of Makarenko, balancing the undoubtedly one-sided veneration bestowed on him by his biographers and followers as a person and pedagogue. Of course, countless examples in Makarenko's own writings and the testimony of his pupils and co-workers would immediately challenge Vaschenko's judgment regarding Makarenko's feelings for his students. Hillig sees Vaschenko's contribution as valuable because it highlights Makarenko's lesser known traits of character, which may explain some of the still unresolved questions as to Makarenko's reluctance to give credit to other pedagogical efforts; his unwillingness to acknowledging the value of pedagogical theory; and finally his conclusion that he alone was following the "right line" and everybody else was wrong.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 75-76.

<sup>13</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 127, 131-32.



"He is Externally a Stern and Taciturn Man. . . ."

Through the Marburg research, important new data are contributing to a more historically accurate portrait of Makarenko. However, in seeking a balanced appraisal of Makarenko's nature, we must consider, as Froese did some thirty years ago, the significant influence of Makarenko's parents on the formation of their son's basic character traits. Their dispositions can be linked, so Froese believes, to fundamental features of Makarenko's pedagogical concepts.<sup>14</sup> The sociable, lively, quick-witted, humorous personality of his story-loving mother, together with her tender, compassionate, and self-sacrificing nature--almost "saintly" according to Vitalii--and the contrasting stern, uncommunicative, reserved, unyielding character of his father seem to coexist in Makarenko's being. The German poet J. W. von Goethe, referring to his own parents, captured a similar duality in a popular rhyme that translates: "From my father I have my stature and the serious conduct of life, from my dear mother my happy nature and joy for creative fantasy."<sup>15</sup> The same, it seems, can be said for Makarenko. Gorky, after a visit to the Gorky Colony in 1928 expressed his impression of Makarenko, then

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<sup>14</sup>Froese, Triebkräfte, 220.

<sup>15</sup>Cited in Rudolf Steiner, Discussions with Teachers, 56.

forty years old, in these words: "He is externally a stern and taciturn man. . . . He obviously feels the need to unnoticeably show his kindness to a youngster . . . to give a smile, to caress their closely cropped heads." <sup>16</sup>

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, Makarenko, in a letter to A. P. Sugak, reported some noteworthy and, indeed unexpected changes in his disposition after taking charge of the Gorky Colony. First Makarenko made reference to his newfound vitality: "I have gained new strength here, far more than you would have ever thought possible."<sup>17</sup> Elizaveta Fedorovna Grigorovich, who had joined Makarenko in the Gorky Colony as a teacher, described him as a lively and happy person, who would work without sleep and breaks.<sup>18</sup> Makarenko himself made reference to this burst of energy, possibly displaying his famed bent for exaggeration: ". . . for about six weeks I have only been sleeping every other night and have even grown used to not sleeping."<sup>19</sup> Makarenko seemed happy and surprised by this change and announced further that he had become a different person, that he was enjoying a sense of direction, that he had

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<sup>16</sup>Maxim Gorky, "Arbeitskolonien für Kinder," quoted by Götz Hillig, ed., Makarenko in Deutschland, 52.

<sup>17</sup>Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 79.

<sup>18</sup>L. Pecha, "Frauen im Leben Makarenkos," in Hundert Jahre, 145.

<sup>19</sup>Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 78.

gained boldness, an iron will, and confidence in himself.<sup>20</sup>

The joyous tone of the letter suggests that Makarenko experienced a new beginning in his life, a fresh awakening as he came to live and work with his colonists. Such change and readiness was, by Makarenko's own account, far from easy, as work in the colony became "more and more difficult, and more and more testing," prompting the question, what exactly was it that propelled Makarenko into such energized and enthusiastic action? Vitalii's answer to this question is worth citing:

[To be perfectly honest] I am fully convinced--Anton did not know that he would become a good pedagogue. He absolutely wanted to become a writer. This was, so to speak, his guiding thought. For this reason he occupied himself primarily with belletristic literature. I don't think that I am mistaken by saying that without the besprizorniki there would have never been a pedagogue [called] Makarenko. For in a normal school there would have been nothing for him to do--one came to school, gave one's lessons, and again went home.<sup>21</sup>

Vitalii's observation about a "normal" school was certainly true in Dolinsk, where Makarenko had spent three years (1911-1913) as a teacher at a railroad school, a time filled with inertia. According to Vitalii, Makarenko's life in this sleepy and isolated village, characterized by Soviet biographers as challenging and creative, was instead filled with boredom and stagnation. Vitalii, who had been Anton's

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>21</sup>"Kolloquium mit V. S. Makarenko," in Hillig, ed., MM III, 154.

student at the railroad school in Kriukov for two years (1906-1908), explained that Anton, contrary to some official biographies, was a teacher like everyone else, and that he used no special examples or methods.<sup>22</sup>

Despite having honestly and faithfully confronted and recorded the difficulties and problems that surfaced at the Gorky Colony, particularly in the beginning years (see chapters two and three), Makarenko felt fulfilled and successful in his new venture. His own words, from a letter to A. P. Sugak, best express this feeling: ". . . we enjoy a far freer and more independent life [in the Gorky Colony]. . . . Most important of all is the fact that we are able to work here in such a way that ensures our work, brings us satisfaction."<sup>23</sup> Makarenko must have realized the unique educational opportunity offered by the Gorky Colony, for he explained in the same letter: "Here we are engaged in an experiment which will be of tremendous importance," and later in the letter "[the question is] the organization of a new experiment in education."<sup>24</sup> Makarenko's unqualified affirmation of this challenge shines through his words. At the 1989 International Makarenko Symposium in Marburg, Germany (mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation), the Finnish educator Kari Murto convincingly

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 146.

<sup>23</sup>Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 79.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 79, 80.

argued that crisis situations require and bring forth new ways of behaving. Makarenko, who in the Gorky Colony enjoyed a much greater administrative autonomy than would have commonly been the case, was, as Murto saw it, also much freer to act according to the requirements of a particular situation.

It is evident that Makarenko entered full force into his new responsibilities. With a sense of urgency and speed he organized the life of the Gorky Colony, developed programs and activities, and transformed the anarchistic behavior of his colonists into socially conscious individuals. In retrospect, it seems evident that the years spent in educating his besprizorniki deeply effected Makarenko's personality. Neither before nor after this great challenge, despite serious problems, did Makarenko seem happier, more fulfilled, and more creative. Certainly life was better for him in the Gorky Colony than in the Dzerzhinsky Commune, where conflicts arose with his superiors. Makarenko seized the opportunity to educate the besprizorniki with optimism and enthusiasm, despite his own admission of moments of doubt, despondency, and feelings of failure. Gorky's help, support and influence is well documented by Makarenko and confirmed by the findings of the Marburg researchers.<sup>25</sup>

During his controversies with the Ukrainian People's

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<sup>25</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 134.

Commissariat for Education and in conflicts with the Dzerzhinsky Commune [GPU] board of governors--basically over educational questions--another of Makarenko's character traits emerged: his combative and confrontational attitude toward authority and his unwillingness to acknowledge their values and beliefs. These tendencies were faithfully recorded by Makarenko himself (see chapter five) and amply confirmed by the Marburg researchers. He refused to grant recognition and approval to those from whom he expected to receive acknowledgment and acceptance for his pedagogical insights and practices. His claim to be the only educator (he probably meant in the Ukraine) who in theory and practice was following the "right line," [Soviet line] could certainly be interpreted as arrogant. Considering Makarenko's deep bitterness over his "opponents" rejection of him as a leading Soviet educator, Vascenko's observation of Makarenko's narcissistic makeup may hold some truth. Until his final days, Makarenko remained hurt and embittered over these conflicts and his loss of recognition.

As a result of assumptions and speculations made by both Eastern and Western scholars regarding Makarenko's political posture (see chapter seven), he was labelled a Soviet Marxist, an orthodox communist, a follower of Lenin and Stalin whose pedagogical concepts had grown out of Marxist-Leninism, or even as an exponent of Stalinist politics and pedagogy. Yet the Marburg investigators have

found no valid evidence for such a premise. Also, no supporting data have been found that would confirm the statements being made by [Soviet] biographers that Makarenko, already before 1920, had been shaped by the revolutionary events of 1905 and had been not only politically active, but also a convinced Marxist. The Marburg findings show the prerevolutionary Makarenko as being democratic and open minded regarding political and social changes--not unlike the majority of the Russian intelligentsia. Vitalii even reported that Makarenko was surprised by the political uprisings in 1917.<sup>26</sup>

After the revolution Makarenko remained guarded in what he said about political developments in the Soviet republics. According to the sources of the Marburg editors, one way Makarenko's hesitation was evidenced, was by his reluctance to establish a Komsomol (Young Communists) cell in the Gorky Colony, something he did only after 1925--following massive pressure by the Ukrainian Komsomol--not, as he had stated in The Road to Life, between 1920 and 1923.<sup>27</sup> This "failure" met the sharp disapproval by the literary critic B. Brainina who, in his review of Makarenko's "Poem" (The Road to Life), chastised him for "almost passing over in silence such an important factor of

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 127-28.

sociopolitical education."<sup>28</sup>

Makarenko was an outspoken critic of certain negative aspects of Soviet life, but the Marburger researchers found that critical passages had been excised from the posthumous edition of Makarenko's Collected Works in Seven Volumes, published by the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences in Moscow. His homages to Stalin occurred when the political environment in the Soviet Union was potentially life-threatening and, according to Hillig's interpretation, can be considered to have been self-protective measures.

No exact data can be established for determining Makarenko's familiarity with Marx's writings, but it can be shown that he did not start to read Lenin's work until 1928, in other words, after having already developed his pedagogical ideas.<sup>29</sup> Based on Makarenko's own accounts from lectures and writings, it seems correct to say that he genuinely affirmed the revolutionary ideals of liberating the young Soviet state from its suppressive past, that he believed in the promise of a better, free, and nonexploitive society, and that he wanted to assist in its construction. While some of his fundamental pedagogical ideas parallel those of Marx, (for a more detailed discussion see chapter seven), there is no solid evidence that Makarenko overtly

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 128 n. 16; Dunstan, "Demythologizing Makarenko," 29.

<sup>29</sup>Hillig, "Der andere Makarenko," 128.



identified with Marxism.

The Marburg findings reveal surprising and unexpected data that permit new insights into Makarenko's inner and outer life during his last years in Moscow (1937-1939). Soviet biographers had portrayed him during this period as a successful and productive writer, leaving the impression that once freed from all his duties as director of his labor colonies, he could devote his full attention and energy to literary activity. As shown in chapter two, the Marburg inquiry cast a very different light on Makarenko's last years. Hillig spoke of "the shipwreck of a writer," beset with financial worries--Makarenko had to support a family of four--and fear of attacks from literary critics hostile toward his writings. All of which took a toll on his health.

Pressured into generating income by writing, Makarenko was forced to make promises that he could not keep. He took on every kind of writing assignments: in Pataki's words, an amazing and "irritating" variety of genres, authoring "novels, plays, filmscripts, theoretical essays, scientific studies, newspaper articles and sketches" on themes ranging from "pedagogical, sociological, psychological, ethical, and aesthetical questions."<sup>30</sup> Pecha observed that Makarenko, in order to produce quick income,

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<sup>30</sup>Ferenc Pataki, "Makarenkos Sozialismusbild," in Hundert Jahre, 198.

took on literary commissions that seemed "inferior" to his qualification and that were a waste of his talent.<sup>31</sup> In addition, Makarenko had numerous, time-consuming responsibilities as literary appraiser and consultant in the Soviet Writers' Union, which he found unduly demanding. In this context it is worthy mentioning the recently published book Inside the Soviet Writers' Union by J. and G. Garrard, who state in their preface: "It is [and has been from its beginning] the Union of Soviet Writers that dominates the Russian writer's professional and even personal existence--as it does that of his non-Russian Soviet compatriots."<sup>32</sup> Makarenko, his strength depleted, grew increasingly discouraged, lonely, and socially isolated. A note in his diary indicates his depression: "I want to write but for some reason I am unable to work."<sup>33</sup>

If Vitalii believed that without the besprizorniki, Makarenko would not have become a good pedagogue, the question arises, would he have become a good writer? Hillig's findings and interpretation give one pause in reflecting on this question. In Hillig's words:

Makarenko obviously saw a way out of this "inferno" [pressure in Moscow] by returning to the "world of

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<sup>31</sup>Pecha, "Frauen im Leben Makarenkos," in Hundert Jahre, 154.

<sup>32</sup>John and Carol Garrard, Inside the Soviet Writers' Union (New York: The Free Press, a division of Macmillan, Inc., 1990), xi.

<sup>33</sup>Hillig, "Das letzte Jahr," in Hundert Jahre, 260.

children." At the end of February 1939, he applied for the post as director at a school in the Moscow Rostokinski-city district. His application was accepted and Makarenko decided to assume this position at the beginning of the new school year in September. It is conceivable that--besides economic security--Makarenko saw in this [opportunity] a chance to reopen an area of experience familiar to him and at the same time create a new basis for future literary activity.<sup>34</sup>

Although Makarenko was "demythologized" by the Marburger editors, and reinterpreted in the preceding discussion, Dunstan's assurance remains unchallenged: "If the result is a somewhat less attractive personality, it is also a much more interesting one than the usual icon."<sup>35</sup> Dunstan's conclusion: "Besides, it is the saints with flaws who speak most clearly to the rest of the human condition" is one with which this author agrees.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 283.

<sup>35</sup>Dunstan, "Demythologizing Makarenko," 28, 32.

Anton S. Makarenko's General Educational Ideas  
and their Applicability in Nontotalitarian Societies

To begin this discussion one might ask whether Makarenko's educational ideas have any applicability outside the specific conditions in the Soviet Union at the time Makarenko was alive and active. As Froese has pointed out, even in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, efforts to put Makarenko's pedagogical insights and experiences to use within various school systems resulted in mistaken decisions and failure. Warnings were sounded that a dogmatic application of Makarenko's principles would not only make the man and his pedagogy disreputable, it would also endanger what was valuable in his educational heritage. As Froese explained, the very idea of transferring principles and practices that had been developed under concrete pedagogical circumstances and within a specific historical context to dissimilar conditions became an obstacle in the realization of such efforts.

Already in the 1950s, Froese reports, critics cautioned against an over-eagerness to copy Makarenko's ideas and practices.<sup>36</sup> The Soviet scholar Valentin Kumarin

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<sup>36</sup>Froese, "Der historische Makarenko," in Hillig, ed., Hundert Jahre, 11.

recalled that even one of Makarenko's colonists, S. A. Kalabalin, who had become a recognized educator himself, relied on the living practice he had experienced in the Gorky Colony, rather than following Makarenko's written accounts. He believed that only an imaginative approach to Makarenko's principles and practices would work.<sup>37</sup> Makarenko himself reminded his lecture audiences that his educational experiences were somewhat peculiar, that he might have thought otherwise had his experiences been different, and that his insights should be taken only as a stimulus. He implored listeners to regard his words not as recipes or as final: "I am still in a stage of searching and becoming. . . . For what I have to tell you are rather intuitions than conclusions."<sup>38</sup> This statement is confirmed by numerous examples illustrating Makarenko's intuitive and spontaneous reaction to a given situation. Makarenko's above-stated counsel would undoubtedly have challenged Bowen's criticism of "his [Makarenko's] desire to make absolute the system which had only immediate value."<sup>39</sup>

Western scholars have been reluctant to consider applying Makarenko's educational ideas and practices for other reasons. While many admired Makarenko's personal

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<sup>37</sup>Valentin Kumarin, in Hillig, ed., Opuscula Makarenkiana, 26.

<sup>38</sup>Werke, vol. V, 260.

<sup>39</sup>James Bowen, Soviet Education, 209.

courage, his devotion to children, his self-sacrificing service, his genuine humanitarianism, and his exceptional achievements--in Bowen's words, "his accomplishments were of the first order"--their admiration has not been without serious reservations.<sup>40</sup> Robert Ulich believes that "the tendency in rightist and ecclesiastical circles to see nothing but evil in Communism" has prevented an "unprejudiced evaluation" of Russian education, including Makarenko's contribution.<sup>41</sup> Bowen holds that Makarenko's system is not applicable outside the "total state" because it "was not in accord with the democratic concept of an educational system" and because "It articulated a definite educational form of the political [Soviet] ideology, and it elaborated a set of aims, methods, and content appropriate to the attainment of the goals [of the Soviet system]."<sup>42</sup> Bowen comes to the conclusion that "Although we in the West have much to learn from a study of Makarenko's methods, they will not be applicable in the democratic state without qualification."<sup>43</sup>

Ideological reasons notwithstanding, many pedagogical complications surface when trying to copy Makarenko's principles. Even Soviet educators found

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ulich, History of Educational Thought, 349.

<sup>42</sup>Bowen, Soviet Education, 209, 205.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 203.

Makarenko's educational ideas were difficult to imitate, impossible to copy, and seemingly resistant to dogmatic applications. Reflecting on this problem of generalizability, several possible explanations arise:

(1) Predisposed as he was to pragmatic and experimental thought, Makarenko did not provide theories, ready-made methods, or techniques that could be generally applied or duplicated. Deliberately, he never gave forth formulas, prescriptions, or recipes. Many of his best ideas were based on a combination of experience, intuition, and empirical observation.

(2) Makarenko's concept of education was much broader than any traditional view held by educators. Though his educational concept encompassed formal classroom instruction, it went beyond cognitive development. In fact, Makarenko was critical of professional pedagogy for being too abstract. Instead, he chose to focus on education as an activity embracing total individual development, its purposes broader than just academic achievement. He focused first and foremost on the personal growth and moral development of his pupils and on their character training. He wanted to develop his students moral sensitivity, instill ethical attitudes, teach standards of civil conduct, and cultivate an aesthetic sense. In other words, Makarenko wanted to take on and teach the whole child. Ulich summarized Makarenko's intentions by saying that Makarenko

wanted his charges to become "whole men" in whom, to use a phrase from Pestalozzi, "the education of the hand developed simultaneously with the education of the heart and the brain"<sup>44</sup>

(3) Makarenko's educational system was exceptionally diverse and complex, thus presenting additional difficulty in its application. He successfully integrated into the colonists daily life a formidable range of activities, including formal school learning, productive labor, an interconnected, inter-related daily living system with clearly assigned responsibilities, constructive use of leisure time, and physical (military) exercises. His goals and objectives were of equal scope: teaching basic norms of civilized behavior, social consciousness, disciplined conduct, work ethic, and, as Ulich stated it, "the complex relationships between freedom and restraint, the self and organization, democracy and authority."<sup>45</sup>

(4) This teaching required a certain type of teacher whose professional role also encompassed all the child-rearing functions commonly performed in the home or by the community. In this sense the teacher took on the responsibilities of parent, advocate, social worker, counsellor, and educator.

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<sup>44</sup>Ulich, History of Educational Thought, 351

<sup>45</sup>Ibid. Ulich is referring to Paul Nash, Authority and Freedom in Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education. Wiley (New York, 1966).



(5) There is one more reason why it seems difficult to apply Makarenko's ideas and practices. He developed his educational principles through direct contact with his colonists. His ideas and insights were not deduced from abstract theories but derived from his response to the immediate reality; in other words, they were drawn straight from life. Weitz highlights this point by saying:

Makarenko developed his education "in, by, and for the collective" not as a theoretical concept, but presented it to the public as a concrete, living example. To this [living example] one must turn in order to understand the exemplary character of his experiment. Whoever, after the lively description in the "Pedagogical Poem" expects an abstract scheme of collective education, or laments the absence of such has, in our opinion, thoroughly misunderstood him. From this concrete and real life, there comes not, nor can there arise a scheme; and [if there was such a scheme] it could not be "applied." However, one not only can, but one should learn from Makarenko.<sup>46</sup>

This proposal--that one cannot "apply" Makarenko's scheme, if ever there was one, but that one can learn from Makarenko's pedagogical ideas and insights--is a call that should not be ignored by those engaged in education or childrearing; for, as has been discussed in chapter seven, Makarenko made some peculiar, but surprisingly convincing contributions to pedagogical thought and practice. Characteristic of these contributions was the fact that,

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<sup>46</sup>Siegfried Weitz, "Makarenko - Revisionen. Anmerkungen zur Wirkungsgeschichte des A. S. M." [Makarenko - Revisions. Remarks regarding the history of the activities of A. S. M.] ed. Victor von Blumenthal et al, in Ergebnisse und Perspektiven Vergleichender Bildungsforschung (München: Minerva Publikationen, 1984), 182.

although these practices had no utilitarian value and were difficult to measure, Makarenko found, in his daily experience, that their educative effect on his defiant young delinquents was evident. Makarenko "discovered" that he could integrate into human intercourse certain features that were usually overlooked in the traditional school environment and that these provided a formative, educative underpinning for educating the child in the broadest sense.

To briefly review some of the essential features of Makarenko's contribution: he did not believe that educational methods should be fixed or abstract, but that they should be mobile and responsive to the particular circumstances; that a teacher's demeanor, his or her tone of voice, manner of gesture, facial expression, and movement were of great educational importance; that traditions had a stabilizing impact on student's conduct, deportment, and performance; that a courteous and considerate tone among students and teachers, an atmosphere of respect, a thoughtful style of living together, a cheerful mood and social awareness of each other had a beneficial effect on the educational community; that beauty and aesthetic surroundings were important factors in the life of the growing child, as was the element of joy, and a positive, hopeful vision of the future. Most important of all--and here Makarenko was inspired and guided by Gorky who, though not an educator, had a genuine feeling for people and the

young--was a positive image of the human being, and the great significance of the teacher's sustaining an affirmative mental image of each child. Makarenko found that the outlook of the teacher could have a profound beneficial effect on relationships with pupils.

The principles and features of Makarenko's contributions are in essence not at all new; to most individuals concerned with education and childrearing they are well-known. The key to Makarenko's educational contributions lies in their having been drawn from direct experience in his work with socially deprived youth; the fact that his approach addresses concerns traditionally ignored or subordinated in classrooms and in teacher training institutions; that his methods have no easily measured properties, yet evidently proved very effective in Makarenko's educational settings; that his approach depends not only on the erudition, the expertise and competencies of the educator, but even more on his or her traits, habits, inner posture and attitudes; that teachers themselves, by their very character, can be nurturing and supportive of the student's personal growth; and finally, that all of these "ideas" need to be rediscovered by each practitioner, with an alert and open mind and with an understanding heart.

Having reviewed Makarenko's major contribution to education, we come to the question: What can we learn from his insights, ideas and experiences? What we can learn from

Makarenko, it seems, is precisely this: He identified aspects and elements of human reality that have clearly formative and educational properties, which he associated with processes of education and upbringing. The most important lesson for later educators may lie in Makarenko's having made conscious the formative power and educational worth of many commonly overlooked features in the child's daily life and school environment, and in Makarenko's unrelenting vigilance in caring for the inner and outer needs of his pupils. There is nothing far-fetched or esoteric about what he found to be educational in the life of a child. In sober and detailed fashion he gave account of his experiences, invariably drawing on lively examples and supportive illustrations.

### Conclusion

Undoubtedly, there is something for educators in general to learn from Makarenko's stimulating insights, particularly those who work within a pedagogical context that views education as something broader than academic learning. An unbiased evaluation of Makarenko's educational principles will now be possible after having gained new insights into his life, beliefs, and personal qualities, which in turn make it easier, in Weitz's words, "to free Makarenko from his [inherited] monumental phantom

existence."<sup>47</sup> It would seem that all educators, East and West, can gain from Makarenko's experiences and resulting insights into what can be educative.

As to whether Makarenko is to be viewed as a stern puritan moralist, an inveterate military man, or a member of the political establishment, we can no longer answer affirmatively. Instead of this inherited Makarenko image, the picture that emerges, character faults and all, is best expressed by Froese. In citing Gorky's words to Makarenko, "On every page [of The March of 1930] one can feel your love for the children, your tireless care for their welfare, and your fine understanding for the souls of the children," Froese wrote:<sup>48</sup>

From this perspective, Makarenko can not only be compared to the greatest Russian educators, but also . . . to our own classic educational and reform pedagogues. . . . In his devotion to the most difficult pedagogical tasks he can only be compared to very few of his predecessors. Herein is revealed his distinct sense of advocacy and responsibility for every child--particularly the outcast--and herein also, again and again, in the balance of love, sternness, and patience, is the great example of a pedagogical genius.<sup>49</sup>

Is Makarenko a historic relic, an old-fashioned humanitarian who, back in the 1920s, "Within the limited

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>48</sup>Pädagogische Werke, vol. 1, 388; see also Kumarin, Anton Makarenko, 58.

<sup>49</sup>Froese, Triebkräfte, 278.

sphere of the youth colonies . . . worked wonders."<sup>50</sup> Do we, as Bowen suggested, have to simply watch for developments, because "the future alone will indicate how accurate were his perceptions and how lasting were his achievements."<sup>51</sup> Or is Makarenko, as the Soviet writer A. Levshin suggested, "inseparable from contemporary times."<sup>52</sup> A random look through current educational literature and the popular press suggests that Makarenko's views, values and beliefs are not outdated. Betty Staley, parent and educator, writes:

Messages in the environment call upon youngsters to get stoned, make lots of money, have a fancy car, attain power, feel good, and "make it" in the world. There are fewer voices in the environment telling them how to build relationships, live meaningfully in their communities, how to care about other people, [and] how to take responsibility. . . .

Young people want to serve, they want to make a difference, and they want to find effective models in the adult world. They look for adults who commit themselves to action, to principles, to ideals. They respect adults who care enough to set limits, who have expectations of them, who talk with them, and most of all, who believe in them.<sup>53</sup>

William Mullen, in his article "Shelter from the Storm" subtitled "Mercy Home catches teens who fall through society's cracks" reports:

[In the Mercy Boys Home] all of them . . . were

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<sup>50</sup>Bowen, Soviet Education, 209.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>A. Levshin, cited by Lehrman, "The Pedagogical Ideas," 179.

<sup>53</sup>Betty Staley, Between Form and Freedom: A Practical Guide to the Teenage Years (Stroud, UK: Hawthorne Press, 1988), xii.

expected in no uncertain terms to listen to and respect one another."<sup>54</sup>

It stresses changing anti-social behavior by the example of resident staff members. The Mercy Home staff also has used another popular treatment philosophy called "Positive Peer Culture," in which children in the program pressure each other to recognize and modify their negative behavioral patterns.<sup>55</sup>

Mullen concludes his report with words that could have come directly from Makarenko:

"In the end, stripped of the modern psycho-jargon that has crept into child-care facilities, what they are doing at Mercy in 1990 perhaps is not so different from what they did in 1890. The old fashioned verities . . . are the same verities the Mercy staff is now working to instill in their modern-day charges: Love. Community. Self-respect. Honesty. Hard work. Self-reliance."<sup>56</sup>

May the last word go to Ulich, who discussed educational practices under different political systems:

To complete the picture, many a slum-raised youth sits daily on the doorstep of a dilapidated home or on a bench in the yard of a modern mass settlement, presenting a picture of existential loneliness as he awaits the arrival of his gang [also a "collective," R. E.] or the arrival of something the identity of which he does not even know. Such a youth might more willingly respond to the self-sacrificing authority of a Makarenko who gives him work to do and a purpose for living than to the admonitions of a teacher trained in a liberal arts college or a school of education. Makarenko's experience with his own professional education [which was not relevant to the realities and the needs of his students] is repeated every day in the United States.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>William Mullen, "Shelter from the Storm," Chicago Tribune Magazine, Section 10, (August 12, 1990): 17.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>57</sup>Ulich, History of Educational Thought, 351-52.

It seems fair to conclude that Makarenko's educational ideas and practices, due to their complex and imaginative nature, can not be readily "applied" in the sense of imitating them or transplanting them into another educational setting. It also seems fair to say that his experiences, insights, and ideas are modern and relevant to contemporary educational concerns, and that, while we cannot copy them, we can learn from them.



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